



ANNUAL REPORTS
OF
GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS
~
2009

**OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER
MALTA**

Annual Reports
Of
Government Departments
~
2009

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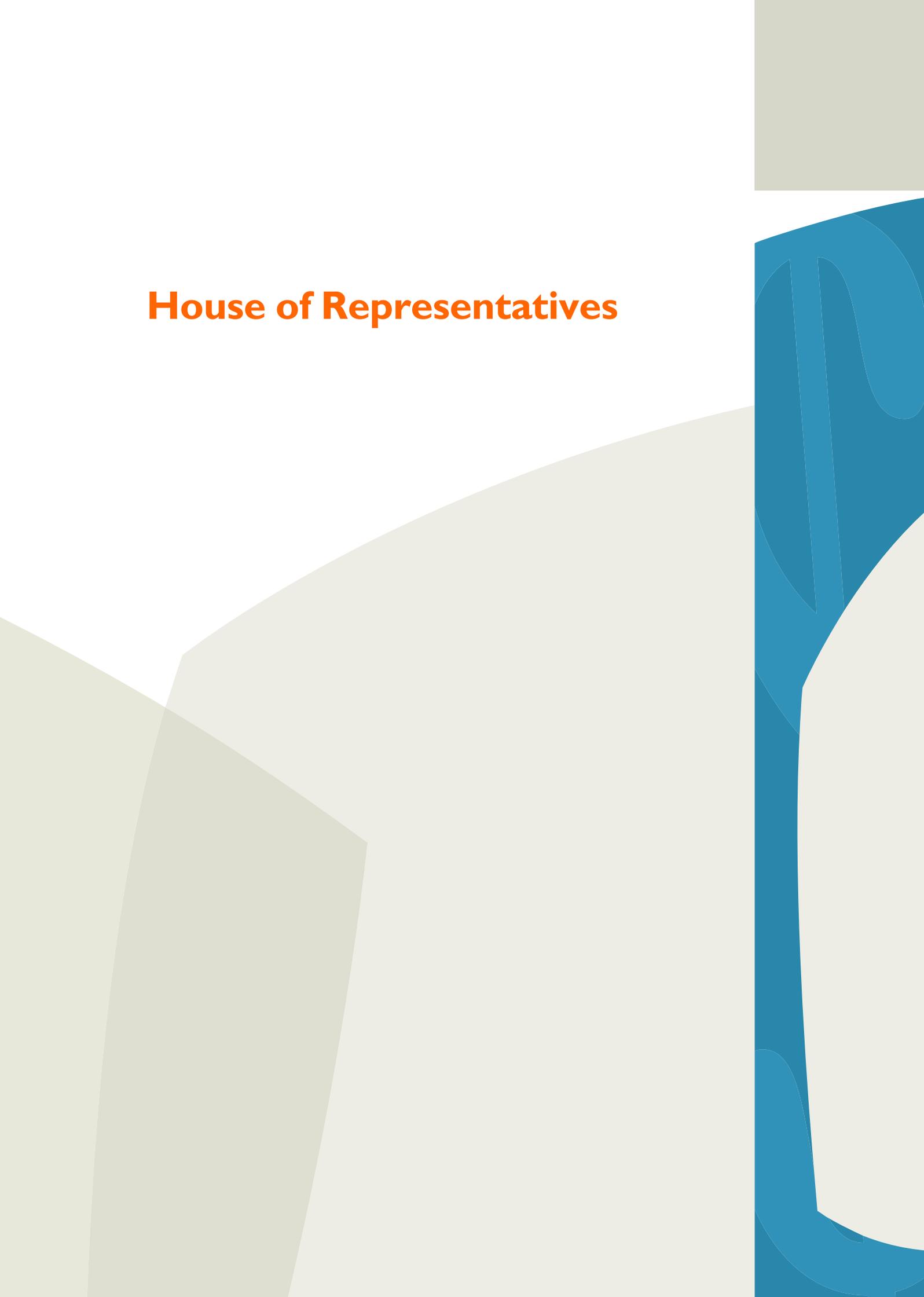
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House of Representatives



House of Representatives

HOUSE BUSINESS

Overview

The second year of the 11th Legislature proved to be a very busy year for the Maltese Parliament. Its 69 Members met 110 times in plenary, meeting three times a week on average, and more frequently when debating the General Estimates for 2010. Adjournment was availed of on 89 occasions, alternating equally between Government and Opposition members. Throughout the year there were two calls for quorum, neither of which was upheld. Six Rulings were requested of the Speaker of the House during the course of the year. Throughout the year the House discussed and approved a number of motions including First Reading of Bills, private Members' motions, motions relating to the debate of the general estimates and two motions calling for the setting up of two new select committees of the House. The House also debated the private Member's motion on the need for legislation on climate change submitted by Hon Leo Brincat.

Other than attending and addressing the Parliament in plenary the Members also participated in a number of meetings of its committees, details of which can be found in the third section of this report. In addition to the six Standing Committees, the two Committees set up by virtue of the Auditor General and National Audit Office Act and the Development Planning Act were also convened in 2009. The House Select Committee on Strengthening Democracy took forward its work from 2008 and will now evaluate the reactions received to a public consultation launched towards the end of the year. In 2009, the House furthermore adopted two resolutions setting up two select committees, one on medically assisted procreation and the other on the re-codification and consolidation of Maltese laws. These two committees are expected to commence their work in 2010.

Sections 3 and 4 of this report provide more information about the committees of the House.

Parliamentary work, however, is not limited to the formal plenary and committee meetings held in the House. Other than the various meetings with foreign delegations and personalities held at the House of Representatives, the Speaker and the Members of Parliament took part in various inter-parliamentary conferences and meetings abroad. Details of the work of these inter-parliamentary fora and the attendance by Maltese MPs can be found in Section 4.

On 4 April, the House met in a special sitting in order to appoint HE George Abela as the eighth President of Malta.

In 2009 the House of Representatives was also host to a considerable number of events, some of which have now become yearly events. Such activities include the EkoSkola Parliament, the Youth Parliament, the NSTF Mini European Assembly and the Parliament for Persons with Disability. As in previous years, Parliament commemorated the events of the *Sette Giugno* and opened its doors to the public for *Notte Bianca*. In addition to these regular events, Parliament hosted a number of other activities, including the celebration of Mediterranean Day, the Malta Encounter of the *Ulysse 2009* Voyage, and the Doha Colloquium on strengthening marriage and the family, amongst others. Details of these activities are found in Section 6 of this report.

Legislative Programme

During 2009, 23 acts were enacted by Parliament, four of which were new acts and 17 amendment acts.

A. New legislation

<p><i>Act I of 2009 – The Public Administration Act</i> The object of this Bill is to affirm the values of public administration, to provide for their application throughout the public sector, and to provide for the organisation and management thereof.</p>
<p><i>Act II of 2009 – The Budget Measures Implementation Act</i> The objects of this Bill are to implement various Budget measures and other administrative measures.</p>
<p><i>Act XV of 2009 – The Authority for Transport in Malta Act</i> The object of this Bill is to provide for the establishment of an Authority responsible for land transport, sea transport and air transport. The bill also makes consequential and related amendments to other legislation.</p>
<p><i>Act XIX of 2009 – The Appropriation (2010) Act</i> This Bill provides for the application of a sum not exceeding €1,901,907,362 for the service of the Financial Year 2010 to meet expenditure under the Votes in the Schedule to the Bill.</p>
<p><i>Act XX of 2009 – The Second Appropriation (2009) Act</i> The Bill provides for the application of a sum not exceeding €190,671,980 for the service of the Financial Year 2009 to meet expenditure under the Votes specified in the First Schedule to the Bill in addition to €1,698,946,008 appropriated by Act No. XI of 2008 and for the appropriation of a further €20 for the service of the financial year 2009 to repay an equivalent amount withdrawn from the Contingencies Fund during the financial year 2009 under the Votes specified in the Second Schedule of the Bill.</p>
<p><i>Act XXIII of 2009 – Services (Internal Market) Act</i> The object of this Bill is to provide for the implementation of Directive 2006/123/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 December, 2006, on services in the internal market.</p>

B. Amendment Acts

<p><i>Act III of 2009 – The Various Laws (Amendment of Financial Provisions) Act</i> The main object of this Bill is to amend various financial related provisions in various laws.</p>
<p><i>Act IV of 2009 – The Equality for Men and Women (Amendment) Act</i> The object of this Bill is to amend the Equality for Men and Women Act, in line with Council Directive 2002/73/EC of the European Union.</p>
<p><i>Act V of 2009 – The Employment and Industrial Relations (Amendment) Act</i> The object of this Bill is to amend the Employment and Industrial Relations Act in line with Council Directive 2002/73/EC of the European Union.</p>
<p><i>Act VI of 2009 – The Motor Vehicles Registration Tax (Amendment) Act</i> The object of this Bill is to introduce a new motor vehicle registration tax and licensing fee system based on polluter pays concept.</p>
<p><i>Act VII of 2009 – The General Elections (Amendment) Act</i> The object of this Bill is to make provision, in certain cases, for voting prior to polling day by persons eligible to vote at General Elections, at elections of Members of the European Parliament and at Local Council elections.</p>
<p><i>Act VIII of 2009 – The Broadcasting (Amendment) Act</i> The object of this Bill is to amend the Broadcasting Act to enable the Broadcasting Authority to license satellite radio and television services.</p>
<p><i>Act IX of 2009 – The Copyright (Amendment) Act</i> The object of this Bill is to render the Copyright Act compliant with the obligations emanating from the WIPO Copyright Treaty 1996 and the WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty 1996.</p>
<p><i>Act X of 2009 – The Civil Code (Amendment) Act</i> The object of this Bill is to reform the rent laws in order to establish social justice with the owners of leased tenements; in a phased manner it liberalises leases made before 1 June, 1995, and also lays the foundations for a lease market which would function properly and thus provide a suitable alternative for adequate and affordable accommodation. The saving clause in the transitory provisions for requisitioned property is made subject to the government's on-going policy aimed at phasing out as soon as possible all Requisition Orders.</p>

<p><i>Act XI of 2009 – The Criminal Code (Amendment) Act</i> The main object of the Bill is to amend the Criminal Code in order to further implement the 2005 Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism and the Council Framework Decision 2005/222/JHA on Attacks against Information Systems, to further penalise certain motivated conduct, and to make provision for the offence of piracy.</p>
<p><i>Act XII of 2009 – The Various Laws (Civil Matters) (Amendment) Act</i> The objects of this Bill are to further amend the Code of Organization and Civil Procedure, following the amendments introduced by Acts XIV of 2006, VII of 2007 and XV of 2008, and also to amend the Civil Code.</p>
<p><i>Act XIII of 2009 – The Interpretation (Amendment) Act</i> The Bill provides for the electronic publication of international instruments to which Malta is a contracting party and the recognition of the publications in the Official Journal and its electronic means of instruments of the European Union.</p>
<p><i>Act XIV of 2009 – The Consumer Affairs (Amendment) Act</i> The object of this Bill is to amend the Consumer Affairs Act, in conformity with Directives 93/13/EEC and 2005/29/EC.</p>
<p><i>Act XVI of 2009 – The Local Councils (Amendment) Act</i> The object of the Bill is to give effect to the proposals for Local Government Reform.</p>
<p><i>Act XVII of 2009 – The Various Financial Laws (Amendment) Act</i> The main object of this Bill is to implement the provisions of Directive 2007/44/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 September 2007 amending Council Directive 92/49/EEC and Directives 2002/83/EC, 2004/39/EC, 2005/68/EC and 2006/48/EC as regards procedural rules and evaluation criteria for the prudential assessment of acquisitions and increase of holdings in the financial sector.</p>
<p><i>Act XVIII of 2009 – The Immigration (Amendment) Act</i> The object of the Bill is to implement the provisions of Directive 2001/40/EC of the 28 May 2001 on the Mutual Recognition of Decisions on the Expulsion of Third Country Nationals.</p>
<p><i>Act XXI of 2009 – The Land Acquisition (Public Purposes) Ordinance (Amendment) Act</i> The objects and reasons of this Bill are the amendment of the Ordinance for the purpose of providing a specific mechanism for the acquisition into public ownership of historical buildings for the purpose of safeguarding and preserving the historical and the cultural identity of Malta and the implementation of other amendments to the Ordinance, <i>inter alia</i> for the purpose of complying with judgements of the Constitutional Court.</p>
<p><i>Act XXII of 2009 – Lotteries and Other Games (Amendment) Act</i> The main object of this Bill is to amend various provisions, in various laws, related to lotteries and gaming.</p>

Parliamentary Questions

3,163 parliamentary questions requiring an oral reply were raised and answered during the year under review, while 16 requiring a written reply, were also answered.

Ministerial Statements

The following six ministerial statements were made to the House in 2009:

- 26 January - Statement by the Prime Minister, Hon Lawrence Gonzi, on his official visit to Germany between 19 and 22 January 2009;
- 3 March - Statement by the Prime Minister, Hon Lawrence Gonzi, on the informal meeting of the Heads of Government of the European Union, held in Brussels on 1 March 2009;
- 23 March - Statement by the Prime Minister, Hon Lawrence Gonzi, on the EU Council Meeting held in Brussels on 19 and 20 March 2009 on the current financial and economic situation, on energy and on climate change;
- 20 April - Statement by the Prime Minister, Hon Lawrence Gonzi, on the irregular immigrants taken on board the MV PINAR-E off the coast of Lampedusa on 16 April 2009;
- 6 July - Statement by the Prime Minister, Hon Lawrence Gonzi, on the EU Council Meeting on 18 and 19 June 2009 and on a meeting with the Prime Minister of Sweden Frederik Reinfeldt, President of the European Council;

- 4 November - Statement by the Prime Minister, Hon Lawrence Gonzi, on the EU Council meeting held in Brussels, on 29 and 30 October 2009 and on a meeting with the Prime Minister of Spain, José Luis Zapatero on 2 November 2009.

Petitions

During 2009 the following two petitions were deposited in Parliament:

- 25 March – Hon Justyne Caruana on behalf of 4,854 signatories requesting assurance for early diagnostic and treatment services for breast cancer;
- 4 November – Hon Silvio Parnis on behalf of residents in the south of Malta regarding the problem of black dust in the area.

Motions

The Office of the Clerk received 56 motions during 2009. 27 of these were in respect of First Readings of Bills. Four motions were private Members' motions.

Other than the considerable number of motions for First Reading of Bills received and a number of motions regarding the approval of the estimates of various authorities and entities falling within government, a number of other important motions were deposited in Parliament during the year under review. These included a motion on certain procedures in the House, a motion on the appointment of the President of Malta and two motions on the setting up of two Select Committees of the House, one on medically assisted procreation and the other on the re-codification and consolidation of laws.

The private Members' motions were the following:

- Extension of St John's Co-Cathedral Museum - submitted by Hon Joseph Muscat, Leader of the Opposition (this motion was subsequently withdrawn by Leave of House)
- Energy Tariffs - Revocation of Legal Notices 330, 331 and 338 of 2008 - submitted by Hon Joe Mizzi
- Traffic management in Anton Buttigieg Street, Żejtun – submitted by Hon Helena Dalli
- Extension of Delimara Power Station - submitted by Hon Joseph Muscat, Leader of the Opposition.

Papers Laid

In 2009, a total of 2,221 documents were laid on the Table of the House, 380 of which were legal notices.

The information tabled by the Speaker included replies to parliamentary questions submitted to Mr Speaker, the Annual Review of the House of Representatives for 2008, the second interim report on the work of the Select Committee set up by motion 34 of 16 July 2008, correspondence received from the Ombudsman, reports of the National Audit Office, and copies of sentences of the Constitutional Courts.

Divisions

Divisions called and taken in 2009 totalled 51.

A casting vote by the Speaker of the House was required and cast on two occasions.

Parliamentary Whips

Whips are Members of Parliament appointed by each political party represented in the House of Representatives to facilitate their Party's contribution to parliamentary business. One of the primary

responsibilities of party whips is to ensure the regular presence in the House of their Parliamentary Group especially when votes are taken and when divisions are called.

Hon David Agius is the Government Whip whilst Hon Joe Mizzi is the Opposition Whip.

SELECT COMMITTEES

Select Committee on Strengthening Democracy

The Select Committee on Strengthening Democracy was set up in terms of Standing Order 121, by way of Motion 34 moved by the Prime Minister, seconded by Hon Angelo Farrugia, on 16 July 2008 and approved unanimously by the House. The Standing Order states that:

“The House may appoint a Select Committee of its Members for the purpose of investigating any subject. It shall be competent for the Speaker to be appointed a Member of any Select Committee of the House.”

The resolution established the main themes to be considered by the Committee:

- strengthening of Parliament
- strengthening transparency and accountability, including public financing of political parties, the Commission against Corruption, the Office of the Ombudsman, conflicts of interest of the Members of Parliament, Parliamentary Secretaries and Ministers
- strengthening the Constitution.

The Members of the Committee are as follows:

Chairperson	Hon Louis Galea, Speaker of the House of Representatives
Substitute	Hon Carmelo Abela, Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives
Government Members	Hon Tonio Borg, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Leader of the House
	Hon Austin Gatt, Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Communications
	Hon Francis Zammit Dimech
Substitutes	Hon Charlò Bonnici
	Hon Beppe Fenech Adami
	Hon Michael Frendo
Opposition Members	Hon Angelo Farrugia
	Hon Charles Mangion
	Hon Karmenu Vella
Substitutes	Hon Evarist Bartolo
	Hon Michael Falzon
	Hon George Vella

Further to the six meetings and the public consultation and hearing during which the public was invited to submit its views on the issue of strengthening Parliament in 2008 this Committee took forward its work during the year under review.

As stipulated by the parliamentary resolution setting up the Select Committee, the Speaker made a second interim report to the House on 14 December 2009, where he reported that the Committee met a further seven times in 2009. In the course of these meetings, the Committee finalised its recommendations on the strengthening of the Office of the Ombudsman. The House will eventually consider these recommendations presented in a Bill.

With regard to the other themes falling within the remit of the Select Committee, the Speaker reported that:

- A Working Group of the Committee is finalising a report on the strengthening of Parliament and the updating of its Standing Orders;
- A public consultation exercise on the electoral system and process, expiring on 18 December 2009, was launched;
- The Committee received from Government a document on the use of blind trusts by Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries;
- Discussions on the strengthening of the Commission against Corruption are still underway; and
- The Committee is still to consider public broadcasting in Malta and revisions to the Constitution.

Select Committee on Medically Assisted Procreation

On 14 December the House approved Motion 113 moved by Hon Tonio Borg, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, calling for the setting up of a Select Committee of the House tasked with examining the practice of medically assisted procreation in Malta, particularly in the light of a lack of a relevant regulatory structure. In terms of Motion 113 the Committee is to be chaired by Hon Jean Pierre Farrugia and composed of a Member from each side of the House.

The Committee is to report to the House within three months of the motion's submission.

Select Committee on Re-Codification and Consolidation of Laws

Also on 14 December, the House approved a second motion moved by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Motion 114, calling for the setting up of a Select Committee of the House tasked with the simplification of Maltese Laws by way of re-codification and consolidation. This Committee is to be chaired by Hon Franco Debono with two Members, one from each side of the House.

The Committee is to report to the House on its progress every six months, and regularly produce special reports regarding the various aspects of its mandate.

STANDING COMMITTEES

The Standing Committees of the House, established with the cooperation and approval of both sides of the House in 1995, are of particular relevance in the workings of the House of Representatives. The Standing Committees, which are an extension of the House itself, have provided that professional touch by which various issues are discussed.

The Standing Committees have furthermore introduced an element of consultation with civil society. Technical experts and representatives from various organisations are invited to discuss and contribute through their expertise on particular subjects. More than that, meetings of the Standing Committees are open to the public and the media and are streamed on the parliamentary website, thus facilitating an even closer relationship between the people and their elected representatives in Parliament.

Committees may submit recommendations to the House for its consideration.

The House has six Standing Committees, namely,

- Standing Committee on House Business
- Standing Committee on Privileges
- Standing Committee on Public Accounts
- Standing Committee on Foreign and European Affairs
- Standing Committee for Social Affairs
- Standing Committee for Consideration of Bills

The Development Planning Act (1992) (Cap. 356) and the Auditor General and National Audit Office Act (1997) (Cap. 396), provide for the setting up of the Standing Committee on Development Planning and the National Audit Office Accounts Committee respectively.

Standing Committee on House Business

The Standing Committee on House Business was set up by way of Motion 9 of 12 May 2008 and is composed as follows:

Chairperson	Hon Louis Galea, Speaker of the House of Representatives
Members	Hon Tonio Borg, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Leader of the House
	Hon David Agius
	Hon Frederick Azzopardi
	Hon Angelo Farrugia
	Hon Joe Mizzi

- “120C. (1) The Standing Committee on House Business shall have power to:
- (a) distribute Bills and other business among the Standing Committees appointed in accordance with the provisions of Standing Orders 96, 120A and 120B;
 - (b) (i) determine the number of sittings to be allotted for the consideration of a Bill by a Standing Committee;
 - (ii) allocate business to each sitting of a Standing Committee; and
 - (iii) determine the time when any business, if not previously concluded, shall be concluded by a Standing Committee; and
 - (c) consider all matters of procedure and business of the House, and report its opinion thereon to the House from time to time.
- (2) A report of all resolutions carried by the Standing Committee on House Business shall be made to the House at the next sitting after a resolution is carried, immediately after Question time, and shall be recorded in the Minutes of the proceedings of the House.
- (3) (a) The Standing Committee on House Business shall be constituted of the Leader of the House, two members nominated by the Prime Minister and two members nominated by the Leader of the Opposition.
- (b) Three members in attendance shall constitute a quorum.
- (4) Substitute members shall also be appointed for each member of the Standing Committee on House Business and the provisions of paragraph (4) of Standing Order 120B shall also apply.
- (5) The Standing Committee on House Business shall be chaired by the Speaker who shall not vote unless on any question the votes are equally divided, in which case he shall have and exercise a casting vote.”

The principal task of this Committee is to organise the business of the House by distributing Bills and other work to the other Standing Committees and the House, establishing and scheduling the number of sittings to be allocated to parliamentary debates and to consider other procedural issues.

The Standing Committee on House Business was convened 14 times in 2009.

Standing Committee on Privileges

The Standing Committee on Privileges was set up by way of Motion 17 of 2 June 2008. It is composed as follows:

Chairperson	Hon Louis Galea, Speaker of the House of Representatives
Members	Hon Tonio Borg, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Leader of the House Hon Owen Bonnici Hon Angelo Farrugia Hon Beppe Fenech Adami Hon Francis Zammit Dimech

- “120D. (1) The Standing Committee on Privileges shall have power to consider cases referred to it by the Speaker or by the House and to take such decisions and to make such recommendations as provided in the Standing Orders and in the House of Representatives (Privileges and Powers) Ordinance or in any law from time to time substituting the said Ordinance;
- (2) The Standing Committee shall be constituted of the Leader of the House, two Members nominated by the Prime Minister and two members nominated by the Leader of the Opposition;
- (3) The provisions of paragraphs (3), (4), and (5) of Standing Order 120C shall *mutatis mutandis* apply to the Standing Committee on Privileges;
- (4) The Standing Committee on Privileges shall, without prejudice to the provision of the Standing Order 164, have power and authority to summon witnesses and order the production of documents before it. The Standing Committee on Privileges may request the attendance of the Attorney General or of his representative, who may also be authorized to participate in the proceedings, but he shall in no case have a vote thereat.”

The Standing Committee on Privileges met four times in 2009. During these meetings the Members of the Committee continued discussing an allegation of breach of privilege raised by Hon Alfred Sant against Hon Austin Gatt, Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Communications, in 2008, on which the Speaker had ruled that there was a *prima facie* breach.

During the last meeting, the Speaker informed the Committee that following discussions between the two parts, a solution acceptable to them both was found. In view of this, the Speaker called on the Committee to consider the case as closed and that its work be deemed as complete. A declaration acceptable to both Hon Alfred Sant and Hon Austin Gatt was tabled in the House by Mr Speaker on 24 March.

Standing Committee on Public Accounts

The Standing Committee on Public Accounts was set up by Motion 16 of 2 June and is composed as follows:

Chairperson	Hon Charles Mangion
Members	Hon Robert Arrigo Hon Helena Dalli Hon Tonio Fenech, Minister of Finance, the Economy and Investment Hon Austin Gatt, Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Communications Hon Philip Mifsud Hon Alfred Sant

The Standing Committee on Public Accounts is chaired by a Member nominated by the Opposition. This follows the system adopted in the UK House of Commons.

Standing Order 120 E outlines the powers and the composition of the Public Accounts Committee as follows:

- “120E. (1) The Standing Committee on Public Accounts shall have the power to:
- (a) inquire into matters relating to public accounts referred to it by the House, a Minister or the Director of Audit;
 - (b) inquire into expenditures as is referred to in subsection (3) of section 103 and section 104 of the Constitution;
 - (c) examine the accounts of statutory authorities, including parastatal organisations, whose accounts are presented to Parliament;
 - (d) request the Director of Audit to submit memoranda on any matter where a request for such submission is made by at least three members of the Standing Committee;
 - (e) consider memoranda submitted by the Director of Audit, made upon a request made to him in virtue of paragraph (d) hereof, or on his own initiative;
 - (f) examine reports, and related documents, made by the Director of Audit;
 - (g) report to the House on any accounts, reports or documents referred in the previous paragraphs hereof;
 - (h) report to the House on any change that it considers desirable in the form of the accounts, on the manner in which they are kept, on revenue or expenditure or the control of money; and
 - (i) discuss Malta’s monetary policy and receive reports thereon from the Governor of the Central Bank of Malta.
- (2) The Public Accounts Committee shall consist of not more than seven members of whom four shall constitute a quorum. The members shall be chosen so as fairly to represent the House in general and the proportion of Government and Opposition members in particular;
- (3) The provisions of paragraphs (3) and (4) of Standing Order 120B shall apply to the Public Accounts Committee;
- (4) One of the members nominated by the Leader of the Opposition and so designated by him after consultation with the Leader of the House shall be appointed Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee. The Chairman shall have an original vote but shall not have a casting vote.”

In 2009 the Public Accounts Committee met eleven times. The Committee started discussing the Annual Report of the Auditor General for the Year 2007, with particular reference to the Performance Audit Follow-up Acquisition of Property by Government and the Ministry of Education, Youth and Employment. The Committee also discussed the grant scheme for tourism enterprises; consultants/advisers on a part-time basis; arrears of revenue with particular interest to Income Tax and VAT; statement on the current status of the accrual accounting system in government departments; the NAO performance audit report on renewable energy sources and energy efficiency in Malta, as well as the monetary policy of the Central Bank which was presented by the Governor of the Central Bank of Malta. Various officials from the Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Investment and from the Office of the Prime Minister, participated in these meetings together with other officials from the respective ministries.

Standing Committee on Foreign and European Affairs

The Standing Committee on Foreign and European Affairs was set up by Motion 18 of 2 June 2008 and is composed as follows:

Chairperson	Hon Michael Frendo
Members	Hon Tonio Borg, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs
	Hon Francis Agius
	Hon Charlò Bonnici
	Hon Luciano Busuttil
	Hon Leo Brincat
	Hon Marie Louise Coleiro Preca
	Hon Beppe Fenech Adami
	Hon George Vella

“120F. (1) The Standing Committee on Foreign and European Affairs shall consist of not more than nine members of whom five shall constitute a quorum. The members shall be chosen so as fairly to represent the House in general and the proportion of Government and Opposition members in particular:

Provided that the Government members appointed on the Standing Committee shall include the Minister for Foreign Affairs who shall have the right to participate and to vote:

Provided further that members of the European Parliament elected from Malta shall have the right to participate in the work of the Standing Committee but shall not have the right to vote or to move motions and amendments.

(2) The Chairperson of the Committee shall be nominated by the Leader of the House from amongst the members representing the Government side, provided that any member of the Committee may, at any time, be appointed by the Leader of the House to act as Chairperson in case of the unavoidable absence of the Chairperson.

(3) The Standing Committee shall have the power to appoint select sub-committees and to delegate any of its functions to such sub-committees.

Provided that the composition of any sub-committee appointed by the Standing Committee shall be determined by the Standing Committee so as fairly to represent the House in general and the proportion of Government and Opposition members in particular.

(4) Subject to what is stated in this Standing Order, the provisions of paragraphs (3) and (4) of Standing Order 120B shall *mutatis mutandis* apply to the Standing Committee on Foreign and European Affairs.

(5) The Standing Committee on Foreign and European Affairs shall have the following functions:

(i) to deal with matters relating to foreign and European Union affairs which may be referred to it by the House or by the Standing Committee on House Business;

(ii) in the context of European Union issues and measures to be taken by the Council of Ministers of the European Union, to scrutinise on its own initiative:

(a) any proposals under the Community treaties for legislation by the Council or the Council acting jointly with the European Parliament;

- (b) any document which is published for submission to the European Council, the Council or the European Central Bank;
 - (c) any proposal for a common strategy, a joint action or a common position under Title V of the Treaty on European Union which is prepared for submission to the Council or to the European Council;
 - (d) any proposal for a common position, framework, decision or a convention under Title VI of the Treaty on European Union which is prepared for submission to the Council;
 - (e) any document (not falling within (b), (c) or (d) above) which is published by one Union institution and which does not relate exclusively to the consideration of any proposal for legislation; and
 - (f) any other document relating to European Union matters placed on the Table of the House by any Minister; and
- (iii) to represent the House of Representatives of Malta at the Conference of European Affairs Committees (COSAC).”

During 2009 the Foreign and European Affairs Committee (FEAC) met 17 times in plenary.

The FEAC held meetings with two Vice-Presidents of the Commission, Commissioner Jacques Barrot and Commissioner Gunter Verheugen. With Mr Barrot, Commissioner responsible for Justice, Freedom and Security, the Members had the opportunity to discuss EU immigration policy and the situation in Malta with regard to irregular immigrants. The debate with Mr Verheugen, Commissioner responsible for Enterprise and Industry, concerned the international economic and financial crisis as well as the European Recovery Plan and other corrective measures.

The Committee also held talks with a number of visiting ministers. With Bernard Kouchner, French Foreign Minister, Members discussed bilateral relations, irregular migration and EU-Mediterranean issues; with Miroslav Lajcak, Foreign Minister of Slovakia, the Committee focused on the Lisbon Treaty, bilateral relations and economic developments following EU membership; with Ewa Bjorling, Minister of Trade of Sweden, the Members referred to trade issues that were on the agenda of the Swedish Presidency with regard to the EU internal market and to international trade; while with Ahmad Soboh, Deputy Foreign Minister of Palestine, the situation in the Middle East was the focus of the meeting.

The FEAC invited and welcomed for an exchange of views a number of parliamentary delegations. With the delegation from the Federal Republic of Germany led by Mr Ernst-Reinhard Beck, they discussed bilateral cooperation and environment policy; with the delegation from the Republic of Korea led by Mr Lee Yong-Kyung they discussed relations between North and South Korea, alternative sources of energy and the international financial crisis; and with the European Affairs Committee of the Czech Republic led by Mr Ludek Sefzig, the committee focussed on the Lisbon Treaty and EU affairs. The committee also met with the European Integration Committee of Croatia led by Mr Neven Mimica, Deputy Speaker and Chairman of Committee on European Integration of the Croatian Parliament, where they referred to the progress made by Croatia towards EU membership and the challenges that laid ahead, and with a delegation from the State of Bavaria led by Prof Ursula Männle, they spoke of the effect of the Lisbon Treaty on national and regional parliaments and on environmental policy.

Moreover, the FEAC held briefings with (i) the Hon Tonio Borg, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, on his visit to Lebanon, Syria and Jordan in April 2009, (ii) with Hon

Tonio Borg, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Mr Richard Cachia Caruana, Malta's Permanent Representative to the EU, on the Commission's Work and Legislative Programme for 2009 and the work of Malta's EU Representation Office in Brussels and (iii) the Hon Carmelo Mifsud Bonnici, Minister of Justice and Home Affairs, on illegal immigration issues.

The Committee also received HE Amr Moussa, Secretary General of the Arab League, with a view to discussing the situation in the Middle East, Mediterranean issues and the EU-Arab League dialogue – resulting from a Malta Meeting of EU-Arab League Foreign Ministers held in February 2008 – and the opening of the EU-Arab League Liaison Office in Malta in 2009.

During 2009, the Chairman of the FEAC met a number of personalities, amongst them, Benita Ferrero Waldner, Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy; HE Mr Suleiman Al-Shahoumi, International Secretary of the General People's Congress of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya; HE Mr Kamalesh Sharma, Secretary General of the Commonwealth; HE Mr Douglas Kmiec, US Ambassador; HE Mr Zhang Keyuan Ambassador of China,; HE Mr Bernd Braun, Ambassador of Germany; HE Ms Louise Jane Stanton, UK High Commissioner; HE Mr Robbert Jan Gabriëlse, Ambassador of the Netherlands and HE Mr Gideon Meir, Ambassador of Israel.

The FEAC in plenary also discussed the issue of subsidiarity and proportionality with regard to legislative proposals drawn up by the Commission. The Committee also participated in the subsidiarity and proportionality test conducted by COSAC with regard to the Proposal for a Council Framework Decision on the right to interpretation and to translation proceedings (COM (2009) 338) in preparation for the new responsibilities that would be assigned to national parliaments through the Lisbon Treaty.

Visits Abroad

Hon Frendo, Chairman of the FEAC, visited Libya in March, at the invitation of HE Suleiman Al-Shahoumi, International Secretary of the General People's Congress of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. He also held talks with Abdulati Obeidi, Secretary for European Affairs, and with Dr Saleh Ibrahim, Director of the Academy for Graduate Studies.

In June 2009 the Chairman of the FEAC was invited by the Hon Miloslav Vlcek, Speaker of the Parliament of the Czech Republic, to join a delegation of Members of the EU National Parliaments to Cairo, Gaza, Jerusalem, Ramallah and Amman.

In July, the Hon Dr Michael Frendo, Chairman, led a delegation of the Standing Committee on Foreign and European Affairs, made up of the Hon Francis Agius, the Hon Charlò Bonnici, the Hon Leo Brincat, the Hon Luciano Busuttil and the Hon George Vella to the People's Republic of China.

The delegation sought to enhance the longstanding good relations and close cooperation between Malta and the People's Republic of China by exchanging views with Mr Zha Peixin, Vice Chairman, and Members of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the National People's Congress, Mr Zhang Ruofei, Chairman of the Standing Committee of the People's Congress of Qingdao in Shandong Province, Mr Li Jianping, Vice President of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries and representatives of the China Foreign Affairs University.

The economic relations between Malta and China were discussed with Mr Yu Ping, Vice Chairman of the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade and with Capt Wei Jiafu, CEO of the China Ocean Shipping Company (COSCO).

A delegation of the Foreign and European Affairs Committee comprising the Chairman, Hon Michael Frendo and Hon George Vella, took part in the XLII Ordinary Meeting of COSAC in October in Stockholm. The main issues discussed during the Conference were the state of play of the Swedish

Presidency Priorities, the climate change challenge, the openness and transparency of EU institutions and in national parliaments when discussing EU matters, and the Stockholm Programme.

Sub-Committees

In accordance with paragraph 3 of Standing Order 120F, four Working Groups were set up in 2008:

Working Group 1

Chairperson	Hon Michael Frendo
Members	Hon Luciano Busuttil Hon Jean Pierre Farrugia Hon Beppe Fenech Adami Hon George Vella

The objective of this Working Group is to analyse the EU *pipeline acquis* in preliminary scrutiny, that is, to identify those documents of political or legal importance and to reach a decision on whether a particular document should be cleared without reserve or referred for debate at the plenary FEAC, Working Group 2, Working Group 3, Working Group 4 or the Social Affairs Committee.

Working Group 2

Chairperson	Hon Jean Pierre Farrugia
Members	Minister responsible for the <i>acquis</i> Hon Francis Agius Hon Roderick Galdes Hon Gavin Gulia Member <i>ad hoc</i> from Government Member <i>ad hoc</i> from Opposition

Working Group 2 addresses issues related to economic and monetary affairs, taxation, transport and energy, budget, internal market and customs union.

Working Group 3

Chairperson	Hon Beppe Fenech Adami
Members	Minister responsible for the <i>acquis</i> Hon Joseph Falzon Hon Noel Farrugia Hon Joseph Sammut Member <i>ad hoc</i> from Government Member <i>ad hoc</i> from Opposition

The areas of competence of Working Group 3 include health, development and humanitarian aid, rural development, agriculture and fisheries, and justice and home affairs.

Working Group 4

Chairperson	Hon Charlò Bonnici
Members	Minister responsible for the <i>acquis</i> Hon Chris Agius Hon Evarist Bartolo Hon Francis Zammit Dimech Member <i>ad hoc</i> from Government Member <i>ad hoc</i> from Opposition

The areas of competence of Working Group 4 include research, employment and culture, consumer protection, environment, and regional policy.

The FEAC, in Plenary and through its Working Groups, also has the power to scrutinise on its own initiative legislative proposals or documents that emanate from European Union institutions and measures to be taken by the Council of Ministers.

Meetings of the Working Groups

Working Group I held eight sessions during 2009 to scrutinise 456 legislative and non-legislative proposals including reports, staff working documents, Green Papers and White Papers. Of these documents, 410 were cleared by Working Group I, 39 documents were referred to the ministries concerned for further information whereas seven documents were cleared by the Foreign and European Affairs Committee and by Working Group III following further discussions with the ministers concerned.

Standing Committee on Social Affairs

The Standing Committee on Social Affairs was set up by Motion 19 of 2 June 2008 and is composed as follows:

Chairperson	Hon Edwin Vassallo
Members	Hon Frederick Azzopardi
	Hon Justyne Caruana
	Hon Michael Farrugia
	Hon Michael Gonzi
	Hon Stephen Spiteri
	Hon Anthony Zammit

In addition to Motion 19, Motions 53 and 71 determined the current list of Committee Members, as shown above.

Standing Order 120G:

- “120G. (1) The Committee for Social Affairs shall deal with all matters relating to social policy, including social assistance and family matters, which may be referred to it by the House or by the Standing Committee on House Business.
- (2) The provisions of paragraphs (2) and (3) of Standing Order 120E shall *mutatis mutandis* apply to the Social Affairs Committee.”

During the course of 2009 Members of the Social Affairs Committee (SAC) continued to discuss family issues in line with the work programme agreed upon for the 11th legislature. In 2009 the SAC was convened 42 times and dealt with matters related to the role of the family in Maltese society.

During the year under review, the Committee published the following reports:

- *More social inclusion measures translate into more measures against poverty: Children fare worst* – the first report published in this legislature dealt with relative poverty and concluded how children are worst affected. The Committee invited Dr Angela Abela (psychologist) and Rev Dr Charles Tabone (sociologist) to brief it about the prevailing situation and put forward proposals.
- *Education and Prevention, Responsibility and Loyalty - The best national strategy for sexual health*. The Committee compiled this report following meetings and presentations given by Dr Philip Carabot, Director of the GU Clinic, Dr Charmaine Gauci, Director, Health Promotion Department and Dr Anna Vella, Sexual Health Educator. The Committee concluded and agreed that the national strategy for sexual health should give a clear message and focus on the following three main values:
 - education and prevention,
 - being responsible; and

- being faithful.
- *Update on the latest ethical and moral considerations relating to assisted procreation.* This document updated the detailed report published by the Social Affairs Committee during the 10th legislature. It was compiled and agreed upon after the Committee held meetings with Rev Prof Emmanuel Agius, Dean of the Faculty of Theology and Rev Dr Ray Zammit, Lecturer in Theology. Prof Agius also sits on the Bioethics National Committee and on the European Group of Ethics and new Technologies under the auspices of the President of the European Commission. This document identifies three important issues related to assisted procreation:
 - which couples should be eligible to obtain assisted procreation;
 - freezing of embryos;
 - donation of gametes by third persons.

These reports, which include a number of recommendations, have been tabled in Parliament by the Chairman of the Social Affairs Committee.

Moreover, another report dealing with ‘The effect of fatherlessness on children’ has been issued for public consultation. This exercise will continue in 2010. Following meetings with Family Court officials and a number of separated persons, the Committee will be drafting another report dealing with issues related to the Family Court and how to make this Court more ‘children friendly’.

The Committee also held a number of meetings wherein family and social issues were discussed, namely, gambling, alcohol and drug addiction, and the negative repercussions of these problems on the family.

Other meetings held in 2009 dealt with the importance of the relationship between the couple. Members acknowledged the importance of education as a factor leading to better relationship in the family. Mr Martin Scicluna from the Today Public Policy Institute briefed the Committee on the document entitled ‘For Better and for Worse – Marriage after legal separation’, while the Diocesan Youth Commission presented the memorandum entitled ‘Youth on Family and Marriage’.

Other subjects on the Committee’s agenda included the need for further research on family issues, people with disability in the family, the elderly and the family, the influence of the media on the family and the fertility rate in today’s society.

During the year under review, the Committee visited Dar Gużeppla Debono in Ghajnsielem, Gozo, the Dun Manwel Attard school in Wardija, the detention centres at Ta’ Kandja and Lyster Barracks in Ħal Far, and the YMCA drop-in Centre in Valletta.

Standing Committee for the Consideration of Bills

The Standing Committee for the Consideration of Bills was set up by Motion 20 of 2 June 2008 and is composed as follows:

Chairperson	Hon Francis Zammit Dimech
Members	Seven Members, four Government Members including the Chairperson, and three Opposition members appointed according to the Bill under discussion

The principal task of the Committee for the Consideration of Bills is to consider Bills referred to it by the House after their Second Reading. The work of the Committee is regulated by Standing Order 120B:

“120B. (1) In addition to the Standing Committees listed in Standing Order 120A, the House may, on motion made after notice, appoint such Standing Committee as may be

necessary for the consideration of Bills or other business committed or referred by the House to a Standing Committee.

- (2) A motion as is referred to in paragraph (1) of this Standing Order shall:
- (a) fix the number of members to serve on the Standing Committee which is to be so composed in such manner as appears practicable to the House as fairly to represent the House in general and the proportion of Government and Opposition members in the House in particular; and
 - (b) name the Chairman who shall preside the Standing Committee.
- (3) Each side of the House shall nominate the members representing it on a Standing Committee, and shall also nominate alternate members for any members so appointed. The members and alternate members representing the Government side shall be nominated by the Leader of the House while the members and alternate members representing the Opposition side shall be nominated by the Leader of the Opposition. The name of members and alternate members so nominated and appointed by the House shall be recorded in the Minutes of the sitting.
- (4) Each side of the House may substitute any member or alternate member nominated by it in accordance with paragraph (3) hereof to represent it on a Standing Committee. Such substitution shall only have effect after the Speaker is notified therewith. The Speaker shall, at the first available opportunity, notify the House, or, if the House is in recess, the Standing Committee on House Business.
- (5) Government Bills referred to a Standing Committee shall have precedence over the other business of the Standing Committee and shall unless otherwise ordered by the House, be considered in such order as the Standing Committee on House Business may determine.”

The Standing Committee for the Consideration of Bills met 23 times in 2009 to discuss in committee stage Bills which had been referred to it by a resolution of the House. 18 Bills were discussed, approved and referred back to the House for Third Reading.

National Audit Office Accounts Committee

The National Audit Office Accounts Committee was set up by Motion 21 of 2 June 2008 in accordance with Part IV of the National Audit Office Act as follows:

13. There shall be a Committee to be styled the National Audit Office Accounts Committee (hereinafter referred to as "the Committee") which shall be composed as follows:
 - (i) the member of the House of Representatives who is for the time being Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee of the House of Representatives or such other committee of the said House from time to time replacing such Committee;
 - (ii) the Minister responsible for parliamentary affairs (hereinafter referred to as "the Leader of the House of Representatives");
 - (iii) three members of the House of Representatives appointed by the said House upon a motion by the Leader of the House of Representatives, as to two members from among members supporting the Government and as to the remaining member from among the members in Opposition.
14. The Committee shall from time to time but not less often than once a year present to the House of Representatives (through the Leader of the House of Representatives) a

report of its activities and the report of its examination of any estimates prepared by the Auditor General.

15. The Committee shall elect a chairman from among its members, and may regulate its own proceedings.
16. Upon the dissolution of the House of Representatives the Committee shall be deemed to be dissolved until it is next reconstituted after the House next meets. Where upon the dissolution of the House of Representatives the sum to be established for the purposes of paragraph 8 of Part III is not so established or the House has not after the end of a financial year established the said sum, the Auditor General shall be entitled to expend, each month, a sum equivalent to one twelfth of the sum or sums established for the previous financial year, until the said sum is so established.
17. The validity of any proceedings of the Committee shall not be affected by any vacancy among its members or by any defect in the appointment or nomination of any of its members.

It is composed as follows:

Chairperson	Hon Tonio Borg, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Leader of the House
Members	Hon Charles Mangion, Chairman Public Accounts Committee Hon Chris Agius Hon Philip Mifsud Hon Jesmond Mugliett

The National Audit Office Accounts Committee met three times in 2009. In its first meeting, the Committee discussed the NAO Report for 2008 and the NAO Estimates for the Financial Year 2009. In its second meeting, the Committee discussed a resolution on the transfer of Government property to Nylon Knitting Ltd., whilst during its last meeting for 2009, the Committee agreed to withdraw the same resolution as further discussions between Malta Enterprise and Nylon Knitting Limited were necessary.

Development Planning Committee

The Development Planning Committee was set up by Motion 57 of 30 September 2008 in terms of Article 17B1 of the Development Planning Act as follows:

- 17B. (1) There shall be a Standing Committee on Development Planning which shall consist of five members, one of whom shall be the Minister, who shall also be the Committee's Chairman, and four other members appointed by the House, of whom two shall be members supporting the Government and the other two shall be members from the Opposition.
- (2) Any development plan referred to the House of Representatives in terms of this Act shall be first referred to the Standing Committee. The Standing Committee shall review any such plan referred to it as aforesaid and shall recommend to the House whether the plan should be approved, with or without amendments, or rejected. The Standing Committee may also discuss any report referred to it by the Minister relating to the structure plan or any review thereof.
- (3) When notice of a motion, as is referred to in article 22(2), is given by the Minister, that motion shall be referred to the Standing Committee of the House, and the said Standing Committee shall discuss the said motion and report thereon to the House.

(4) Not later than one month after a notice as is referred to in subarticle (3) has been referred to the Standing Committee of the House, the said Standing Committee shall discuss the structure plan or any review thereof, and shall, not later than one month after the said plan or review thereof has been referred to it, report thereon to the House:

Provided that where the said Standing Committee fails to report to the House within the said period of one month, the House may pass on to discuss the motion.

(5) Where the report of the Standing Committee on a motion is unanimous, the House shall proceed to vote on such motion and on any amendments that are proposed in the said report without debate.

It is composed as follows:

Chairperson	Hon Lawrence Gonzi, Prime Minister
Members	Hon Charles Buhagiar
	Hon Franco Debono
	Hon Joseph Falzon
	Hon Roderick Galdes

The Development Planning Committee did not meet in 2009.

INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

An important aspect of the work of the House of Representatives is establishing contacts with other parliamentarians.

This aim is reached, other than by receiving foreign delegations and visitors to the Parliament, when the Speaker and the Members of Parliament participate in inter-parliamentary meetings organised by various international organisations.

Outgoing visits by Mr Speaker

On 27 and 28 February, the Speaker, Hon Louis Galea, attended the Conference of Speakers of EU Parliaments in Paris, France. The topics discussed in the conference were the institutional future of the EU and the implementation by national parliaments of the relevant clauses of the Lisbon Treaty, the involvement of parliaments in crisis management in a European context, the preparation of the parliamentary dimension of the Presidency of the EU and the Future of Europe for 2030.

On 6 and 7 May the Speaker, Hon Louis Galea, participated in the Meeting of the United Nations Committee on the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People which took place in Cyprus. The aim of the conference was to emphasise the role of parliamentarians and inter-parliamentary organisations in providing information to the public, policy formulation and support on a fair and peaceful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian issue. In his address, Hon Galea called on inter-parliamentary assemblies to effectively coordinate their work in finding a solution to the Middle East crisis and stressed that parliamentary diplomacy had an important role to play in this respect. Hon George Vella, Chairman of the Committee on the Middle East of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean, also addressed the conference.

Between 2 and 4 June Hon Galea took part in the commemoration of the 20th Anniversary of the first free elections in Poland. The event took place at the Polish parliament in Warsaw. The Speakers of the two Polish Chambers presided over the event. The various Speakers of European parliaments were addressed by Lech Walesa, founder and leader of Solidarnosc movement, and Tadeusz Mazowiecki, the first non-Communist and democratically elected Prime Minister of Poland. Personalities from

Bulgaria, Lithuania, Slovakia, Germany and Russia who featured prominently in the time of the fall of Communism also took part in the commemoration.

On 27 June Mr Speaker attended the official commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Iron Curtain in Budapest, Hungary. The event celebrated the liberation of Hungary from the rule of the Soviet Union, the return to liberty and democracy and its role in the events that led to the fall of the Iron Curtain and of the Berlin Wall.

Between 2 and 8 August the Speaker visited the Cypriot parliament in Nicosia. The purpose of this visit was to observe how the Cypriot parliament dealt with the construction of a new parliamentary building. This visit was made in the light of the projected construction of a new building to house the Maltese Parliament.

Between 15 and 18 September Hon Galea made an official visit to Ljubljana, Slovenia, accompanied by Hon David Agius, Government Whip, and Hon Joe Mizzi, Opposition Whip. During the visit the delegation had meetings with the Speaker of the National Assembly, Dr Pavel Gantar, and with delegations from various parliamentary committees. The delegation was also received by the Slovenian Prime Minister Borut Pahor and the Slovenian President Dr Danilo Türk. The delegation also had the opportunity to meet with leaders of a number of political parties in Slovenia.

On 10 December the Speaker attended an Extraordinary Conference of Speakers of EU Parliaments in Stockholm, Sweden. The Conference was convened in view of the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, and its consequences for national parliaments and cooperation between the European Parliament and national parliaments.

Outgoing Visits of Maltese Parliamentary Delegations

Standing Committee on Foreign and European Affairs

March	On 9 and 10 March, Hon Charlo Bonnici participated in the Conference of Foreign Affairs Committees Chairpersons (COFACC) held in Prague, Czech Republic. Between 21 and 23 March, Foreign and European Affairs Committee Chairman Hon Michael Frendo visited Libya on the invitation of HE Suleiman Ah-Shahoumi, International Secretary of the General People's Congress of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya.
July	Between 1 and 9 July a delegation of the Foreign and European Affairs Committee led by Hon Michael Frendo and comprising Hon Francis Agius, Hon Charlo Bonnici, Hon Leo Brincat, Hon Luciano Busuttil and Hon George Vella visited China.
October	Hon Michael Frendo and Hon George Vella took part in the Conference of EU Scrutiny Committees (COSAC) that was held in Stockholm, Sweden, between 4 and 6 October.

European Parliament and European Union Presidency Meetings

Joint Parliamentary Meetings are co-chaired by the president of the European Parliament (EP) and the president of the national parliament of the country holding the rotating EU Presidency. These meetings are also jointly organised and coordinated between the EP and the national parliament of the EU Presidency. Particular emphasis and priority is given to policy issues where the EU at present does not legislate, but nevertheless takes important decisions. The common foreign, defence and security policy, the macro-economic and monetary policy coordination and areas of freedom, security and justice and climate change, cover such issues.

The aim of the Parliamentary Meetings is not to arrive at common positions between the representatives of national parliaments and the EP, but to establish better parliamentary oversight and control with intergovernmental and non-legislative decisions taken at the EU level. They seek also to be a parliamentary input for the European Council meetings.

Joint Committee Meetings are proposed on the initiative of the individual parliamentary committees of the EP who invite colleagues from their corresponding committees in national parliaments. These meetings are a continuation of existing practice and mainly cover the policy areas where the EU has legislative powers using the co-decision procedure. The aim of these meetings is to promote exchange of views between European and national parliamentarians with a view to influencing the legislative decisions of the EP.

During the course of the year under review, Maltese Members of Parliament participated in the following meetings:

January	<p>On 19 and 20 January Hon Angelo Farrugia and Hon Francis Zammit Dimech participated in a parliamentary meeting on the progress in the area of freedom, security and justice organised jointly by the European Parliament and the Czech EU Presidency in Brussels;</p> <p>Hon David Agius and Hon Marlene Pullicino participated in a meeting of the Chairpersons of Committees on Secure and Sustainable Energy for Europe, held in Prague on 25 and 26 January.</p>
February	<p>Hon David Agius and Hon Gavin Gulia took part in a parliamentary meeting organised jointly by the European Parliament and the Czech EU Presidency on a New Deal for European Economic Recovery in Brussels on 16 and 17 February;</p> <p>On 22 and 23 February Hon Michael Falzon and Hon Jean Pierre Farrugia participated in a meeting of the Security Committees Chairpersons organised by the EU Presidency in Prague discussing integrated rescue systems, and legal and illegal migration in connection with environmental security.</p>
March	<p>On 5 March Hon Justyne Caruana participated in a Conference on Women and the European Elections organised in Brussels by the European Parliament.</p>
April	<p>On 2 April Hon Angelo Farrugia took part in an Inter-parliamentary Committee Meeting with national parliaments in Brussels on the transposition and implementation of EU Consumer Law;</p> <p>Hon Charles Mangion attended a meeting of the Budget and Financial Committees Chairpersons organised by the Czech Presidency in Prague on 27 and 28 April.</p>
September	<p>Between 6 and 7 September Hon Jean Pierre Farrugia and Hon Charles Mangion attended a meeting of the Economics of Climate Change and Sustainable Public Finances Committee organised in Stockholm by the Swedish EU Presidency.</p>
October	<p>Hon Beppe Fenech Adami took part in the Joint Committee Meeting on the Stockholm Programme organised by the European Parliament in Brussels on 8 October.</p>

Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) brings together democratically elected Members of Parliament from the 47 Member States of the Council of Europe. Its powers extend only to the ability to investigate, recommend and advise; nevertheless, its recommendations on issues such as human rights have significant weight in the European political context. The European institutions often refer to the work of the PACE, especially in the fields of human rights, legal cooperation and cultural cooperation.

The Assembly has 10 permanent committees that meet throughout the year to prepare reports and projects for resolutions in their respective fields of expertise.

The Assembly sets its own agenda; it discusses European and international events and examines current subjects which interest the populations of the countries of Europe covering issues related to human rights, democracy, protection of minorities and the rule of law.

The Maltese delegation to the PACE is composed as follows:

Members	Hon Francis Agius MP, Leader of the delegation Hon Robert Arrigo MP Hon Joe Debono Grech MP
Substitute Members	Hon Marie Louise Coleiro Preca MP Hon Joseph Falzon MP Hon Beppe Fenech Adami MP

In 2009 the members of the delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe participated actively in both the plenary sessions of the Assembly as well as in the various Committees of which they are Members. This participation included an address by Hon Joseph Falzon delivered to the Assembly on the Copenhagen negotiations on climate change followed by the address of Hon Marie Louise Coleiro Preca who spoke on the tourism sector, describing it as highly climate-sensitive. Hon Falzon also had the opportunity to address the Assembly on the water challenge in the countries of the Mediterranean basin.

The Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee met during the Autumn part-session to vote on a number of amendments arising out of an opinion report prepared by Hon Francis Agius on behalf of the Migration, Refugees and Population Committee. The Migration Committee was asked to formulate an opinion on the McCafferty Report - Fifteen years since the International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action. The report included issues relating to family planning, assisted childbirth, prevention of sexually transmitted infections, family planning, abortion services and gender equity and equality in primary and secondary education.

The challenges faced by small national economies were the subject of a Motion for a Resolution submitted by Hon Marie Louise Coleiro Preca. The motion was accepted, and the Assembly approved the decision of the Bureau to refer it to the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development for its consideration and report. The document spoke of costs borne by small peripheral economies, which costs may be attributed to inability to benefit from economies of scale, a higher reliance on strategic imports such as food and fuels, limited absorption capacity, the issue of indivisibility of costs and exposure to external shocks.

The following information elencates the Maltese delegation's participation in both the Assembly plenary sessions and Committee meetings where Members had the opportunity to participate in discussions on a number of texts which later were adopted or otherwise by the Assembly:

January	On 22 and 23 January Hon Marie Louise Coleiro Preca attended a meeting of the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development in London; Hon Beppe Fenech Adami, Hon Robert Arrigo, Hon Marie Louise Coleiro Preca and Hon Joe Debono Grech participated in the 1 st Part of the 2009 Ordinary Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg held between 26 and 28 January.
March	Hon Marie Louise Coleiro Preca attended a meeting of the Committee on Social, Health and Family Affairs in Paris on 11 March, meetings of the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development on 12 March in Paris and in Limassol on 27 and 28 March, as well as a meeting of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights in Berlin on 23 and 24 March;

- On 13 March Hon Francis Agius participated in a meeting of the Standing Committee in Paris;
- On 16 and 17 March Hon Francis Agius and Hon Joe Debono Grech took part in a meeting of the Political Affairs Committee in Paris;
- On 30 and 31 March Hon Joe Debono Grech participated in a meeting of the Committee on the Honouring of Obligations and Commitments by Member States (Monitoring Committee) in Valencia.
- April Hon Beppe Fenech Adami, Hon Francis Agius, Hon Marie Louise Coleiro Preca, Hon Joseph Falzon and Hon Joe Debono Grech participated in the 2nd Part of the 2009 Ordinary Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg that was held between 26 and 29 April.
- May On 15 May Hon Francis Agius and Hon Joe Debono Grech participated in a meeting of the Sub-Committee on External Relations in St Petersburg;
- On 26 May Hon Joe Debono Grech participated in a meeting of the Political Affairs Committee in Paris and in a meeting of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population in Paris on 27 May.
- June On 11 and 12 June Hon Joe Debono Grech attended a meeting of the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs in London;
- Also on 11 and 12 June, Hon Francis Agius and Hon Marie Louise Coleiro Preca took part in a meeting of the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee in London;
- Hon Beppe Fenech Adami, Hon Francis Agius, Hon Robert Arrigo, Hon Marie Louise Coleiro Preca, Hon Joseph Falzon and Hon Joe Debono Grech participated in the 3rd Part of the 2009 Ordinary Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe that was held between 22 and 25 June in Strasbourg.
- September On 4 September Hon Joseph Falzon participated in a meeting of the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs in Paris;
- On 10 and 11 September Hon Francis Agius and Hon Joe Debono Grech participated in a meeting of the Political Affairs Committee in Paris;
- On 14 September Hon Francis Agius participated in a meeting of the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee in Paris;
- Hon Beppe Fenech Adami, Hon Marie Louise Coleiro Preca, Hon Joseph Falzon and Hon Joe Debono Grech participated in the 4th Part of the 2009 Ordinary Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe that was held between 27 September and 2 October in Strasbourg.
- October On 10 October Hon Joe Debono Grech took part in a meeting of the Sub-Committee on the Europe Prize organised by the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs in Ankara.
- November On 12 and 13 November Hon Francis Agius and Hon Joe Debono Grech participated in a meeting of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population in Antalya;
- On 13 November Hon Marie Louise Coleiro Preca participated in a meeting of the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee in Paris;
- On 27 November Hon Marie Louise Coleiro Preca attended a meeting of the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development in Paris;
- On 30 November Hon Francis Agius and Hon Marie Louise Coleiro Preca participated in a meeting of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, in Paris.
- December On 14 and 15 December Hon Joe Debono Grech took part in a meeting of the Political Affairs Committee in Paris;

Hon Marie Louise Coleiro Preca attended a meeting of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights in Paris on 16 December;

On 17 December Hon Joe Debono Grech participated in a meeting of the Committee on the Honouring of Obligations and Commitments by Member States (Monitoring Committee) in Paris.

One other point worth mentioning was the rejection of Malta's all-male list of nominees to serve as a Judge on the European Court of Human Rights. At its meeting on 28 April 2009 the Sub-Committee on the Election of Judges to the European Court of Human Rights decided that the Assembly should accept Malta's list of nominees. However, this decision did not get the required double majority by the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights which met on Tuesday 23 June. Whilst getting a two-thirds majority of members who cast their vote (30 in favor – 13 against) the Sub-Committee's recommendation did not manage to harness the support of a simple majority of all members entitled to vote, which, according to the Rules and Procedures of the PACE, should amount to at least 42 members.

2009 also marked the 60th anniversary of the Council of Europe and the election of Mr Thorbjorn Jagland, formerly President of the Norwegian Parliament, as Secretary General of the Council of Europe. It was also the year when the first ever Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly Human Rights Prize, began to be awarded so as to honour "outstanding civil society action in the defence of human rights in Europe". The British Irish Rights Watch, an independent non-governmental organisation, was selected as the winner for monitoring the human rights dimension and the peace process of the conflict in Northern Ireland since 1990. The prize consisted of €10,000, a medal and a diploma which was awarded at a ceremony in Strasbourg on the occasion of a special debate on "the state of human rights in Europe" during the Assembly's summer plenary session (22-26 June 2009).

Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM) was set up in Nafplion, Greece, in February 2005, on the initiative of Maltese parliamentary delegations participating within the Inter-Parliamentary Union. Malta holds the seat of the Secretariat of the Assembly.

The aim of the Parliamentary Assembly is to provide the Mediterranean with a unique parliamentary forum of its own and bring together, on an equal footing, the national parliaments on the Mediterranean littoral.

By addressing issues of common concern to foster and enhance further confidence between Member States to ensure regional security and stability and promote peace, the Assembly works to develop cooperation among its Members in its fields of action by promoting political dialogue and understanding between parliaments concerned.

The detailed work of the Assembly is carried out by three Standing Committees which draw up opinions and recommendations. The committees of the PAM are:

- Committee on Political and Security Related Cooperation
- Committee on Economic, Social and Environmental Cooperation
- Committee on Dialogue among Civilisations and Human Rights.

Furthermore, in early 2008, the Standing Committees of the Assembly set up a number of working groups under the form of ad hoc Committees and Special Task Forces.

The Members forming part of the Maltese delegation to the PAM are:

Members	Hon Jesmond Mugliett, Leader of the delegation Hon Franco Debono Hon Louis Deguara Hon Justyne Caruana Hon George Vella
Substitute Members	Hon Stephen Spiteri Hon Michael Falzon
February	On 20 and 21 February Hon Jesmond Mugliett and Hon Stephen Spiteri attended a meeting of the Special Task Force established under the 2 nd Committee of Environment and Climate Change and on Disaster Management, in Limassol.
March	Between 12 and 15 March Hon Justyne Caruana participated in a meeting of the 3 rd Standing Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean, in Rome.
April	On 2 April Hon George Vella attended the first meeting of the Special Task Force on organised crime, in Cairo.
May	Between 17 and 22 May Hon George Vella formed part of a delegation of the PAM led by PAM President Hon Rudy Salles on a visit to the Middle East.
June	Between 24 and 26 June Hon George Vella and Hon Justyne Caruana participated in the 4 th meeting of the Standing Committees, in Lisbon.
September	Hon Jesmond Mugliett, leader of the Maltese PAM delegation, participated in the PAM's mission to the USA between 2 September and 1 October.
October	Between 20 and 22 October Hon Justyne Caruana and Hon George Vella attended the 4 th Plenary Session of the PAM in Istanbul.

Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly

The Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly (EMPA), established in 2003, is the most recent institution of the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean.

EMPA consists of parliamentarians appointed by the national parliaments of the EU Member States, the national parliaments of the Mediterranean partners and from the European Parliament.

EMPA:

- provides parliamentary impetus, input and support for the consolidation and development of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership;
- expresses its views on all issues relating to the Partnership, including the implementation of the association agreements;
- adopts resolutions or recommendations, which are not legally binding, addressed to the Euro-Mediterranean Conference.

The committees of EMPA are the Committee on Political Affairs, Security and Human Rights, the Committee on Economic, Financial and Social Affairs and Education, the Committee on the Promotion of the Quality of Life, Human Exchanges and Culture and the Committee on Women's Rights in the Euro-Mediterranean Countries, as well as an ad hoc Committee on Energy and Environment.

The Maltese delegation to EMPA comprises:

Members	Hon Censu Galea, Leader of the delegation Hon Jean Pierre Farrugia Hon George Vella
Substitute Members	Hon Leo Brincat Hon Edwin Vassallo Hon Ninu Zammit

March	On 6 March Hon Jean Pierre Farrugia participated in a meeting of the Committee on Economic and Financial Affairs, Social Affairs and Education in Cairo; Hon Censu Galea and Hon George Vella participated in the 5 th Plenary Session of EMPA in Brussels between 15 and 17 March; On 16 March Hon Leo Brincat attended a meeting of the ad hoc Committee on Energy and Environment in Brussels.
June	On 20 and 21 June Hon Censu Galea participated in a meeting of the Committee on Economic, Financial and Social Affairs and Education in Cairo.
November	On 3 November Hon George Vella took part in a meeting of the Committee on Political Affairs, Security and Human Rights in Brussels.
December	Hon Censu Galea participated in a meeting of the Working Group on Financing the Assembly and Revision of EMPA's Rules of Procedure on 10 December in Brussels.

Commonwealth Parliamentary Association

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) is an association of Commonwealth parliamentarians united in their interests, respect for the rule of law and individual rights and freedoms, and by the pursuit of the positive ideals of parliamentary democracy.

The mission of the CPA is to promote the advancement of parliamentary democracy by enhancing knowledge and understanding of democratic governance. It seeks to build an informed parliamentary community able to deepen the democratic commitment of the Commonwealth and to further cooperation among its parliaments.

Members of the Maltese House of Representatives took part in the following CPA gatherings in 2009:

February	Between 2 and 7 February Hon Michael Falzon and Hon Jeffrey Pullicino Orlando participated in the UK Conference on International Migration and Human Trafficking in London.
March	Between 1 and 13 March Hon Joseph Sammut participated in the 58 th CPA Seminar on Parliamentary Practice and Procedures in London.
May	Hon Joe Mizzi took part in the 21 st Commonwealth Parliamentary Seminar between 25 and 29 May in Sydney.
June	Between 15 and 19 June Hon Chris Agius, Hon David Agius and Hon Roderick Galdes attended the 40 th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference of the British Islands and Mediterranean Region in Guernsey.
July	Hon Philip Mifsud and Hon Joe Mizzi took part in the CPA Inter-parliamentary Conference on Climate Change between 5 and 11 July in London.
September	Between 28 September and 6 October Hon David Agius, Hon Justyne Caruana and Hon Alfred Sant attended the 55 th CPA Conference and the 29 th CPA Small Branches Conference in Tanzania.

On 19 and 20 March a delegation of the CPA Canadian Branch led by Mr Russ Hiebert, Chair of the Canadian Branch, made a visit to Malta. During their visit the delegation had the opportunity to call on the Speaker of the House as well as meet with a number of Members of Parliament, where they discussed the new technology that is helping to improve communication between the Commonwealth organisations in general and the good relations that have been maintained between Canada and Malta. The delegation also visited Malta's main ports of entry with a view to discussing the immigration system and procedures.

During their visit at the House of Representatives the delegation also attended the inauguration of the Mediterranean Day Colloquy which was taking place in the Tapestry Chamber. The delegation was also shown around the 'Afrika' photographic exhibition which was set up in the parliamentary committee room.

Inter-Parliamentary Union

The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) is an international organisation established as a forum for political multilateral negotiations. The Maltese Parliament, together with the parliaments of 142 other countries, is member of the IPU. IPU has a permanent observer status at the United Nations.

One of the organs of the IPU is the Assembly which meets twice a year. The Assembly is composed of parliamentarians designated as delegates by the members of the Union. It is assisted in its work by a number of Standing Committees which normally prepare reports and draft resolutions for the Assembly.

The Executive Committee of the National Group comprises:

President	Speaker of the House of Representatives
Vice Presidents	Prime Minister Leader of the Opposition

The Maltese delegation to the IPU is made up of:

Members	Hon Michael Gonzi Hon George Vella
Substitute Members	Hon Philip Mifsud Hon Joe Mizzi

Members of the Maltese delegation attended the two Assembly meetings that were held during the year under review:

April	Between 5 and 10 April Hon Michael Gonzi and Hon Joe Mizzi participated in the 120 th Assembly of the IPU in Addis Ababa.
October	Hon Philip Mifsud and Hon George Vella attended the 121 st Assembly of the IPU in Geneva between 19 and 21 October.

Parliamentary Assembly of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe

Originally established in 1990 with 320 members, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE PA) comprises parliamentarians from 56 participating states. The aim of the OSCE PA is to facilitate inter-parliamentary dialogue which is an important aspect of the overall effort to meet the challenges of democracy throughout the OSCE area.

The Maltese House of Representatives is represented in the OSCE PA as follows:

Members	Hon Louis Deguara, Leader of the delegation Hon Frederick Azzopardi Hon Angelo Farrugia
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Members of the Maltese delegation participated in the following meetings:

February	On 19 and the 20 February the Members of the Maltese delegation to the OSCE participated in the Winter Meeting of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in Vienna.
June	Between 29 June and 3 July Hon Frederick Azzopardi and Hon Angelo Farrugia participated in the 18 th Annual Session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in Vilnius.

October Hon Louis Deguara and Hon Angelo Farrugia participated in the Fall Meeting of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in Athens between 9 and 12 October.

Others

February Between 15 and 17 February Hon Alfred Sant took part in a Conference on Combating Anti-Semitism held in London;

On 26 and 27 February Hon Beppe Fenech Adami and Hon Joe Mizzi participated in the European Energy Efficiency Watch Conference organised by the European Forum for Renewable Energy Sources (EUFORES) in Wels.

March Between 3 and 5 March Hon Jesmond Mugliett participated in the 16th Plenary Session of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, in Strasbourg

June Hon Michael Frendo, Chairman of the Foreign and European Affairs Committee, took part in a parliamentary delegation to Gaza and Israel led by the Speaker of the Czech Parliament between 7 and 13 June.

December Between 1 and 3 December Hon Joseph Falzon attended the 57th Plenary Session of the Assembly of the Western European Union (WEU) held in Paris.

Incoming Visits

Visit by the Germany-Malta Parliamentary Friendship Group

Between 9 and 13 March the Maltese Parliament hosted the Germany-Malta Parliamentary Friendship Group. During their stay, the members of the delegation, led by Mr Ernst-Reinhard Beck, had the opportunity to call on the Speaker, Hon Louis Galea, and to meet with the Maltese Members of the Germany-Malta Parliamentary Friendship Group and the House Standing Committee on Foreign and European Affairs.

Outside Parliament, the delegation also had meetings with the Prime Minister Hon Lawrence Gonzi, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Hon Tonio Borg, the Minister for Justice and Home Affairs Hon Carmelo Mifsud Bonnici, the Minister for Gozo Hon Giovanna Debono, the Leader of the Opposition Hon Joseph Muscat, and with the Chairman of the Malta Financial Services Authority Prof Joe Bannister.

Visit by the Italian Parliamentary Committee on Schengen, Europol and Immigration

On 17 July a delegation of the Italian Parliamentary Committee on Schengen, Europol and Immigration led by Ms Margherita Boniver, made a visit to Malta, calling on, amongst others, the Speaker of the House. The main subject discussed during the talks was the problem that Malta is facing with illegal immigration.

Visit by a delegation of the Korea-Malta Parliamentary Friendship Group

During a two-day visit to Malta between 20 and 22 August, a delegation of the Korean National Assembly, led by Mr Lee Yong-Kyung, President of the Korea-Malta Parliamentary Friendship Group, held talks with Speaker Hon Louis Galea as well as a meeting with the House Standing Committee on Foreign and European Affairs. The purpose of the visit was to enhance mutual understanding and strengthen cooperation between Korea and Malta in the international arena.

Visit by the European Integration Committee of Croatia

Between 30 November and 2 December the Maltese Parliament hosted a visit by a delegation from the European Integration Committee of the Parliament of Croatia, led by the Deputy Speaker and Chairman of the European Integration Committee Mr Neven Mimica. During the visit, the delegation had meetings with the Speaker Hon Louis Galea, and with the House Standing Committee on Foreign and European Affairs. Other meetings were held with the Governor and Deputy Governor of the Central Bank of Malta, with the Director General (Economic and European Affairs) at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, at the Malta Enterprise and with representatives of the Malta Labour Party (*Partit Laburista*). The aim of this visit was to exchange views on the experience of Malta's accession to the European Union.

ASSOCIATION OF FORMER MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

The Association of Former Members of Parliament of the House of Representatives held a number of meetings during the course of 2009, with its Annual General Meeting taking place in December. The Maltese Association has been member of the European Association of Former Members of Parliament of the Member States of the Council of Europe or of the European Union since 2006.

The principal objective of the European Association, according to the statute, is to promote the European ideal, based on individual and political liberties, the primacy of law and true democracy, and to contribute to the European construction. To this end, the association wants to make the European institutions better known and may organise meetings and colloquies aimed at examining the major problems of society.

During 2009 members of the Association of the House of Representatives participated in a number of meetings of the European Association:

Dr Joseph Buttigieg and Mr Lino Debono took part in a meeting of the Bureau and General Assembly of Former Members of Parliament on 13 and 14 March in Paris.

Between 23 and 25 April Dr Joseph Buttigieg and Mr Lino Debono attended a meeting of the Spanish Association of Former Members of Parliament in Madrid.

On 23 and 24 October Mr Lino Debono and Mr Vincent Moran took part in a meeting of the Bureau and General Assembly of Former Members of Parliament in Lisbon.

Mr Lino Debono attended the celebration for the 40th Anniversary of the Establishment of the Association of Former Members of Parliament of the Italian Republic in Rome.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

The palace of new thinking – 2nd roundtable

On 26 and 27 February 'The Palace of New Thinking', the second of a series of monthly meetings led by Dr Edward de Bono, was held in the parliamentary committee room. These meetings were being held to mark 2009 as the European Year for Creativity and Innovation. The mission of the Palace of New Thinking is to generate new ideas and concepts on the global level and to make these available in situations requiring possibility design, especially, prior to conflict resolution negotiations and the creative design of solutions for complex scenarios.

The theme of this second meeting was irregular immigration. This subject was discussed and approached through the use of creative thinking tools developed by Dr Edward de Bono.

'Afrika' Photographic Exhibition

In March, the Parliament hosted the photographic exhibition 'Afrika' in its Committee Rooms. After travelling through various cities in Italy, the exhibition was brought to Malta from Assisi on the initiative of Patri Dionysius Mintoff, founder and director of the *Laboratorju tal-Paċi*, and Hon Louis Galea, Speaker of the House of Representatives.

The exhibition comprised 50 portraits by Cesare Pippi. The photos showed a diversity of African faces, mainly of children and young people from Mali, the Ivory Coast, Zanzibar, Kenya and Senegal, amongst others.

In his speech during the opening of the exhibition, Hon Galea said that this exhibition should help the visitors to understand that Africa is not just about poverty, dictatorships and war, often leading to illegal immigration into other countries. Although these aspects feature prominently in the news, Africa is also a continent full of opportunities wherein lies a great part of the future of the world. Mr Speaker noted too that the exhibition was taking place at the same time that the House was debating illegal immigration.

Patri Mintoff also referred to the fact that the exhibition was being hosted in the place where decisions are taken, enabling visitors to look at Africa from a different perspective, not solely as a continent begging for aid.

Mediterranean Day colloquy

21st March was chosen by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM) in Monaco in November 2008 to mark Mediterranean Day. This day coincides with the first day of spring and does not have any political or religious significance, making it an ideal day to promote Mediterranean values.

The Maltese Parliament celebrated this day on 20 March by holding a colloquy in the Tapestry Chamber at the Grandmasters' Palace. Mr Speaker referred to the PAM's aim to contribute to transform the Mediterranean into a place of stability, comprehension and shared prosperity. He added that the common values shared by all Mediterranean countries far outweigh their racial, linguistic and religious differences. Hon Galea also made reference to the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development and the initiative for a holistic marine policy by the European Union, stating that the good will of states outside the EU was necessary to make these initiatives effective.

The colloquy was also addressed by the PAM General Secretary Sergio Piazzzi, as well as Hon Jesmond Mugliett, Hon George Vella and Hon Justyne Caruana, members of the Maltese delegation to the PAM.

Appointment of the President of Malta

On 4 April, the House met in a special sitting in the Throne Room of the Grandmasters' Palace. During this sitting the Prime Minister, Hon Lawrence Gonzi, in terms of Article 48 of the Constitution of Malta, moved a motion calling for the appointment of Dr George Abela as the President of Malta. The motion was approved unanimously without debate by the House. Dr Abela was thus appointed as the eighth President of the Republic.

Seminar – Replying to Parliamentary Questions

On 14 April the House of Representatives, in conjunction with the Staff Development Organisation within the Office of the Prime Minister, organised a half-day seminar focussing on parliamentary questions. The seminar targeted officials from the various ministries who in the course of their duties

handle parliamentary questions and was intended to help participants understand the purpose and nature of parliamentary questions, as well as parliamentary procedures and relevant provisions in the Standing Orders of the House.

The sessions were led by Ms Pauline Abela, Clerk of the House, and Mr Ray Scicluna, Assistant Clerk to the House.

Address by UN Secretary General

On 22 April the House was addressed by United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki Moon. In his address, the Secretary General spoke of how the United Nations was increasingly engaging with parliamentarians and other new partners, who, through their legislative powers, have the ability to give domestic meaning to international standards.

Mr Ban Ki Moon made reference to the fact that Malta was the first to raise the issue of climate change at the United Nations General Assembly in 1988. Reference was also made to the problems Malta was facing with illegal immigration which has been a long standing challenge, as well as the positive role that Malta has always played in bringing Israelis and Palestinians together for quiet, practical cooperation and dialogue on water issues and other matters of common concern.

The Secretary General concluded by saying that common to all the issues raised was the need to increase global cooperation to deliver collective solutions to collective problems.

NSTF Mini European Assembly

The Mini European Assembly of the National Students Travel Foundation (NSTF) is a simulation of the Assembly of the Council of Europe where students represent different European countries and discuss topics of European relevance through the political perspective of the European country they represent.

The final plenary session of the 20th edition of the Mini European Assembly, with the theme ‘The European Transport Policy – Building Bridges or Flying Solo?’ was held in the Parliamentary Chamber on 8 May.

Speaker Hon Louis Galea chaired this final plenary session that had as its keynote speaker the European Commission Vice-President and Commissioner responsible for Transport Antonio Tajani.

Europe Day

On 9 May, a debate organised by the European Parliament Office and the European Commission Representation in Malta was held in the Parliamentary Chamber to commemorate Europe Day. The debate featured six girl guides on one side of the House and six Members of Parliament from both parties represented in Parliament, on the other. The hour-long debate touched upon various subjects including the environment, equal opportunities, health and education.

European Commissioner Joe Borg was a special guest at the debate, which was chaired by the Speaker of the House Hon Louis Galea. Minister George Pullicino, Parliamentary Secretaries Joe Cassar and Clyde Puli, Hon Evarist Bartolo, Hon Leo Brincat and Hon Justyne Caruana participated in the debate.

Ekoskola Parliament

The fifth annual session of the EkoSkola was held in the parliamentary chamber on 27 May. This even brings together young policy makers participating in the EkoSkola Programme face to face with

the country's official policy makers. The main theme for this year's session was the State of the Environment Report 2008. The young children, together with a number of Members of Parliament from both sides of the House, discussed ways of improving the quality of life in our schools and in our country.

The session was chaired by Speaker Hon Louis Galea.

Sette Giugno

As in previous years, the Maltese Parliament held a ceremony to commemorate the *Sette Giugno*, a day which has become synonymous with the development of the Maltese parliamentary democracy as we know it.

In his speech at the foot of the *Sette Giugno* Monument, Speaker of the House Hon Louis Galea, referred to the political and economic unrest that prevailed in Malta in the wake of the First World War. This unrest peaked on 7 June 1919, a day of uprising and violent incidents resulting in the loss of a number of Maltese lives and leaving many others injured. As a result of these incidents Malta was granted self-government in 1921.

Mr Speaker added that although the country has long since moved on from times of such strife and unrest, the world is still characterised by international economic and financial crises, environmental problems and conflicts. Such conditions mean that politicians and parliamentarians have serious and pressing challenges to face. As suggested by the events of the *Sette Giugno* the solution to these challenges lies in a sound political vision and strategy.

Youth Parliament

On 16 September, the Parliamentary Chamber provided the venue for the sixth session of the Youth Parliament. The activity was held in two sessions, chaired by the Deputy Speaker, Hon Carmelo Abela.

During the two sessions all seven resolutions put forward were approved. The resolutions concerning the environment, education, transport and infrastructure, and illegal immigration were debated in the morning session which was targeted for participants aged between 13 and 16, while social security, the right to life and creativity and innovation - a European Opportunity, were debated in the afternoon session by participants aged 17 and over.

In his remarks, Hon Carmelo Abela stated that the involvement of young people in the various sectors of society ensures that they are not only relevant in the future but also now. The Deputy Speaker appealed to young people to carry on taking an interest in what was happening around them in order to be able to make a difference.

Minister Dolores Cristina, Parliamentary Secretary Clyde Puli, Hon Evarist Bartolo and Hon Owen Bonnici participated in this activity.

Notte Bianca

For the third year running, the Maltese Parliament participated in the *Notte Bianca* activity by opening its doors to the public. This year, the event was held over two days on 3 and 4 October. As in previous years the venue attracted a large number of people who were shown around the Parliamentary Chamber and Committee Rooms by the parliamentary staff. Throughout this time, a number of Members of Parliament, as well as the Speaker of the House, were present to meet the public.

Doha Colloquium – Strengthening marriage and family

On 6 and 7 October the Cana Movement in collaboration with the Centre for Family Studies of the University of Malta organised a colloquium on strengthening marriage and the family.

The colloquium was held under the auspices of the Social Affairs Committee and was conducted in the parliamentary committee room. The event was funded by the Doha Institute for Family Studies based in Qatar. Leading experts delivered presentations on various topics related to the family and hosted academics, researchers, family professionals and policymakers as well as top managers in child and family services.

Hon Edwin Vassallo, Chairman of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs, addressed the colloquium at the close of its first day and the Speaker of the House, Hon Louis Galea, closed the proceedings on 7 October.

Ulysses 2009 – A Mediterranean Voyage

On 8 and 9 October the Malta Encounter of ‘*Ulysse 2009 – A Mediterranean Voyage*’ was held in the House of Representatives. The voyage was an initiative of the Ambassador of France and writer Daniel Rondeau, supported by the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Bernard Kouchner, the Speaker of the Maltese House of Representatives, Hon Louis Galea, and the Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean, Mr Sergio Piazzi.

This voyage, starting in Valletta, was held on board the French military ship, La Meuse. Jacques Barrot, Vice-President of the European Commission, responsible for justice, freedom and security, was in Malta for the occasion. A special guest was Rudy Salles (Member of the French National Assembly), President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean.

Ulysse 2009 brought together, in Malta, Tunisia, Libya, Cyprus and Lebanon, a number of people coming from all over the Mediterranean who are passionate about peace and freedom. Writers and intellectuals, French, Tunisians, Algerians, Maltese, Libyans, Greeks, Cypriots, Lebanese, Egyptians and Turks, French Diplomats and Members of Parliament, travelled from every country to participate in debates, meetings and conferences. Israeli and Palestinian singers performed together in "One Voice".

The Malta Encounter combined three elements:

- First, it brought together a wide spectrum of people with an interest in culture - men and women from both sides of the Mediterranean, artists and politicians, established intellectuals and youth;
- Second, it provided a forum for an informal and open discussion; and
- Third, a special focus was made on how the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean can serve to facilitate the consideration and actuation of further proposals and initiatives.

The Malta Encounter was closed by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hon Tonio Borg.

Malta National Book Fair

On 11 November a delegation comprising Members from both sides of the House, led by the Speaker of the House, visited the National Book Fair that was being held at the Mediterranean Conference Centre. During the visit Hon Louis Galea stated that the Maltese Parliament supports initiatives being undertaken to promote Maltese books and authors, and referred to the important role that the National Book Council played in this respect.

Parliament for Persons with Disability

On 9 December the parliamentary committee room served as the venue for this year's Parliament for Persons with Disability. This special parliamentary session, organised by the National Commission for Persons with Disability, has now become an annual event marking the week dedicated to persons with disability.

The theme chosen for 2009 was 'Everyone has a right to work' and its intention was to enable consultation on the national employment policy for persons with disability. During the session Members from both sides of the House participated in the discussion. People with disability and their relatives had the chance to voice their concerns during this sitting.

OBITUARIES

During 2009 the House expressed its grief:

- on 12 January, at the loss of Mrs Evelyn Bonaci, ex-Member of Parliament, who passed away on 16 December 2008;
- on 26 January, at the loss of Mrs Maria Deguara, mother of Hon Louis Deguara, who passed away on 23 January 2009;
- on 23 March, at the loss of Mr Charles Mifsud, ex-Clerk of the House, who passed away on 19 March 2009; and
- on 2 November, at the loss of Mr Joe A Grima, ex-Member of Parliament, who passed away on 1 November 2009.

Furthermore, on 28 January the House commemorated the victims of the Holocaust and observed a minute of silence.

PAULINE ABELA
Clerk to the House

Electoral Office

Electoral Office

RECEIPT OF APPLICATIONS FOR THE ISSUE OF IDENTITY CARDS

The Commissioner of Police is the authorised officer designated to issue Identity Cards; however, the ID Cards Section at the Electoral Office administers the whole process, issues the ID Card to all persons aged from 14 years upwards who are entitled to it, and is responsible for its maintenance. The Electoral Office receives applications for the issue of ID Cards, registers the changes resulting from transfer of residence, change of status or other particulars and prints the ID Cards. The whole process for the issue of an ID Card to an individual takes only a few minutes; the computer system prints the plastic ID Card with security features conforming to international standards and this is given to the applicant on the spot. During the year under review, about 55,000 ID Cards were issued to Maltese nationals, nationals of other Member States, third country nationals and irregular migrants, and nearly 7,300 ID Cards were issued to replace the ID Cards that were reported lost or stolen. Staff from the Electoral Office regularly go to hospitals, institutions for old-age persons and in private residences where the sick and aged persons residing there apply for the issue or renewal of their ID Card.

From 1 May 2004 onwards, the Maltese ID Card has been accepted as a travel document in all EU Member States. In December 2004 the Council of the European Union issued regulations regarding additional security features including biometrics in travel documents. Consequently, the Maltese ID Card must conform to those regulations and significant changes to the ID Card data capture and issuing processes are envisaged in the near future. During 2009 discussions continued on various aspects of the ID Card and these took into account the changing priorities arising from circumstances beyond the control of the Electoral Office. A legal notice was published in January 2009 whereby expired ID Cards were to remain valid up to 31 December 2009; however, persons who decided to use their ID Card as a travel document were asked to call at the Electoral Office to renew their ID Card and have the correct expiry date printed on it. Naturally, this measure avoided waste of resources and duplication of work whilst it also gave the competent authorities the necessary time to take appropriate decisions on such and important matter.

COMPILATION AND PUBLICATION OF THE ELECTORAL REGISTERS

The information collected in connection with the issue of ID Cards was used as the basis for the compilation of the Electoral Registers. Applications for registration as voters and/or for transfer of residence were received at the Electoral Office and these were initially verified against records held at this Office, the Public Registry, the Department for Citizenship and Expatriate Affairs and at any other appropriate Department. The applications were processed and the names of applicants were included in the Electoral Registers published in April and October, provided that the applicants had the requisite qualifications in terms of the provisions of the Constitution of Malta. Confirmation from the competent authorities was obtained prior to deleting from the Electoral Registers those persons reported to be deceased, of unsound mind, or sentenced to more than one year imprisonment. Investigations in conjunction with Police Officers were also carried out prior to deleting persons from the Electoral Registers. At the end of each month, a list showing the additions, changes and deletions to the Electoral Registers was given to the delegates of the political parties as laid down in Article 28 of the General Elections Act, 1991 and Regulation 7 (Third Schedule) of the Local Councils Act, 1993.

When Malta became a Member of the European Union, nationals of other Member States who resided in Malta and had the necessary qualifications became eligible to vote in elections for Local Councils and elections for Members of the European Parliament. Consequently, a separate register was also compiled to include the names of persons eligible to vote in these elections according to the European Parliament Act approved by the House of Representatives.

UPDATING OF INFORMATION

Information held at the Electoral Office is regularly updated. This process comprises the inclusion of new voters, the transfer of voters from one locality to another and the deletion of deceased persons, emigrants and others who lose their qualifications to vote according to law. The Electoral Office also updates regularly the Identity Card database that contains information on all persons aged from 14 years upwards who were issued with an ID Card and this process includes changes due to new street names and door re-numbering. The information is copied on a weekly basis to the Director of Civil Registration who maintains the Government Common Database which is accessed by Government Departments on a daily basis. During the year inspections were carried out to verify the correct address of persons and to ensure that voters were included under the correct street names, localities and electoral divisions.

The computer system at the Electoral Office is built on a relational database and the particulars of voters and their digitised images both form an integral part of the system. All textual and image data is checked before being computerised because ultimately this is used for printing Identity Cards, compiling and updating Electoral Registers, printing voting documents and lists of persons entitled to vote, as well as documentation for other electoral processes. Regular consolidation exercises are carried out to ensure that the data is correct and appropriate measures are taken, including back-up facilities, to protect the data and comply with the Data Protection Act.

HOLDING OF ELECTIONS

The main task of the Electoral Office during 2009 was the holding of elections for Members of the European Parliament and elections in 23 Local Councils on Saturday 6 June. Preparations for these elections began in late 2008 and certain key personnel from other Departments were deployed at various stages to assist the staff of the Electoral Office. The counting complex at the ex-Trade Fair Grounds, Naxxar that was used for the general election held in 2008 was leased for another year and refurbished to provide the proper facilities for the MEP and Local Councils elections. This included minor structural changes to the existing buildings, additional facilities for the political parties, Police, AFM and the Media, transport of heavy items, and a re-assessment of security requirements to make the Trade Fair Grounds fully functional as a counting complex and compliant with the electoral laws. A major problem that was foreseen at a very early stage was the excessive heat that would be generated inside the complex during summer and the Electoral Commission took the necessary steps to rent adequate cooling systems to reduce temperatures inside the counting hall. Most of the work was carried out during the first quarter of 2009 and was completed by the end of May.

During the election for Members of the European Parliament and elections for Local Councils, 581 polling booths were set up in Government schools and other premises. Instruction booklets, forms and other publications used during elections were reviewed and printed again where necessary, and the Electoral Commission provided special templates with Braille script and a recorder in the polling places to facilitate voting by visually impaired persons. Following recent amendments to the electoral laws, the Electoral Commission provided facilities for advance voting on Saturday 30 May at the counting complex for those persons who declared that they would be away from Malta on polling day. The Electoral Commission received 34 nominations from candidates for the election of Members of the European Parliament and 272 nominations from candidates for Local Councils elections, as well as over 3,000 applications for Assistant Commissioners to supervise the poll and over 2,200 applications for Counting Staff to count the votes. The results of the election for Members of the European Parliament were presented to the Clerk of the House on

Tuesday 9 June and published in the Government Gazette on Tuesday 16 June. The counting of votes for the Local Councils elections was held on Saturday 13 June and the results were presented to the Prime Minister on Monday 15 June and published in the Government Gazette on Friday 19 June. After these elections were over, ancillary work still had to be done including compilation of statistical information and reports, dismantling of polling booths, payment to personnel who were assigned tasks during the electoral processes, payment to suppliers for services rendered during elections and other work.

ELECTORAL COMMISSION

The Electoral Commission that conducted the election for members of the European Parliament and the elections for Local Councils during 2009 was appointed on 29 August 2006 for a period of three years. During the year under review the Commission met regularly each week and more frequently during election periods, held meetings with the delegates of political parties and representatives of organisations and public institutions, and discussed matters covering different topics. The Commission took decisions on the registration and deletion of voters, on matters related to the compilation of the Electoral Registers and on the conduct of the elections. Members of the Commission participated in seminars and conferences held abroad where the main themes of discussions were electoral processes and related issues.

OTHER MATTERS

The Electoral Office has a Section in Gozo where facilities are provided for the issue and renewal of ID Cards and for other relevant information requested by persons residing there. This Section also serves as the focal point in Gozo whenever elections are held there.

Several households in Malta and Gozo have either a house name only or often a wrong house number and this situation creates problems for the Electoral Office to identify correctly the address of a person. This problem is also shared by other Government Departments that access the Common Database. During 2009 the Electoral Office in conjunction with the Police and the Works Division of the Ministry for Resources and Infrastructure continued with an exercise whereby every door in Malta and Gozo would eventually be assigned an official door number. This long-term exercise which began in 1998 was initially expected to affect over 60,000 households; however, this number increased substantially over the years and is likely to increase further in the future. During 2009 about 50 streets in various localities were either re-named or given an official name and about 1,200 households in 35 streets were either assigned a door number or re-numbered. Persons residing in those households were then required to change their ID Card to reflect the changes and corrections resulting from this exercise.

During the year under review, female employees took an active participatory role in the day to day running of the Electoral Office and currently, they out-number their male colleagues in most Sections within the Office. They were assigned various major exercises throughout the year, supervised and participated in electoral processes and attended board meetings and Court sittings as necessary. Statistics and information on electoral processes continued to be compiled and published on a gender basis and the satisfactory outcome of this measure confirmed that this trend should continue in the future.

Staff from the Electoral Office participated in seminars held locally and abroad, attended courses organised by the Staff Development Organisation of the Office of the Prime Minister, and were often appointed on various boards. They were also asked to give advice and support to other Departments, particularly to the Department for the Care of the Elderly by printing the Kartanzjan card on a regular basis, to the Police, the Public Registry and the Department for Local Government by providing updated information.

The Electoral Office always took initiatives to provide a good service to the public and the Service Quality Charter that was launched in November 2004 continued to provide the basis for an efficient customer service. The services provided by the Electoral Office were given with courtesy, within defined time frames, and in an efficient manner. Following the positive outcome of discussions held during 2006 to introduce new opening hours at the Electoral Office particularly on Wednesday afternoons and Saturday

mornings, the same office hours were again retained during 2009. This measure was welcomed very well by the public because it provided an even better and more convenient service.

The Electoral Office has had its own website since 2004 and this was regularly updated with the relevant information throughout the year. The website was accessed by many persons including those living abroad and proved very useful particularly during the period covering the election of Members of the European Parliament and the elections for Local Councils.

EDWARD R GATT

Chief Electoral Commissioner

**Office of the
Prime Minister**

Management and Personnel Office

Mission Statement

To formulate, develop and promote in close collaboration with line ministries and departments, progressive human resource policies, strategies and management systems in support of the business of Government and to assist and support line ministries/departments to achieve government plans and programmes and to render an efficient service to the public.

THE ORGANISATION

The Management & Personnel Office forms an integral part of the Office of the Prime Minister and is composed of three separate yet inter-related directorates which are the Resourcing, the Employee Relations and the HR Systems & Data Management Directorates. Established in the early 1990s to function as the Public Administration's central HR Unit, the Management & Personnel Office contributes directly towards the formulation and implementation of strategic HR management and development.

With the recent enactment of the Public Administration Act, the Management & Personnel Office will be focusing on re-inventing its strategic role in the centre of HR management practices across the Public Administration. It will focus less on 'micro' issues of human resources and more on 'macro' issues such as workforce planning, change management, monitoring of HR management in line departments and promoting leadership development. The Office will further spearhead the implementation of the provisions of the Public Administration Act, contribute to and facilitate the increased decentralisation of procedural processes to line ministries, and the continued streamlining of the bureaucracy of Government as related to HR management.

MAIN ACTIVITIES

Amongst a number of initiatives and activities, the main challenges undertaken by the Management & Personnel Office in 2009 included administrative preparations in anticipation of the enactment of the Public Administration Act, the creation of various instruments of delegation, the Employee Support Programme and the launching of the skills profiling exercise.

RESOURCING DIRECTORATE

INTRODUCTION

During 2009 the Resourcing Directorate focused on the following key tasks:

- preparation in connection with the delegation of recruitment procedures to line ministries as contemplated in the Public Administration Act. The process proceeded along a two-pronged approach which mainly dealt with the anticipated transformation of the Resourcing Directorate's own role following delegation and the transition of line departments into a new role once delegation is effected;
- addressing issues that arise from the implementation of the Contracts of Service for a Fixed Term Regulations, 2007 (LN 51/2007), as subsequently amended in 2008 (LN 239/2008) and 2009 (LN 376/2009), and their resultant implications on MPO and line departments;
- the development of several instruments of delegation, some of which were implemented this year and others which are still at a draft stage. The instruments of delegation contemplate the devolution of powers

from the centre to the line, with a view to reducing existing time frames and creating more efficient processes through the delegation of authority.

SECTORAL ANALYSIS – PROGRAMMES AND INITIATIVES

Rationalisation of Human Resources

With the aim of addressing human resource requirements in a holistic, structured and effective manner, the Resourcing Directorate continued to actively participate in the capacity-building exercise held conjointly between MPO, the Ministry of Finance and the respective line ministries.

Public Sector Recruitment

During the year, 425 requests for the recruitment of staff, and involving 976 employees, were submitted by 57 different government-funded entities. 171 requests were for the filling of 443 vacancies in new positions, whilst 222 requests were for the replacement of 480 employees who had resigned or retired from the service. 32 requests for the filling of vacancies in new positions, and involving the recruitment of 53 employees for a definite period, were approved in connection with ESF-funded projects. Approval was granted for the commencement of recruitment procedures with the Employment and Training Corporation (ETC)

The 443 vacancies in new positions were filled by 273 full-timers and 170 part-timers respectively. Full-time staff who resigned or retired in 2009, and for whom a replacement was required totalled 329. 151 part-timers were also replaced. EU-funded projects resulted in the engagement of 46 full-timers and one part-timer.

In liaison with the ETC, the Department also issued approvals to entities for the extension of the statutory validity periods of work permits which had already expired. Before approvals for extensions of work permits were issued, the Directorate investigated the reasons behind the extension of the selection process and eventual recruitment beyond the stipulated time period.

After careful consideration, approvals to requests for recruitment of staff on short definite contracts or on replacement basis, as in the case of temporary replacements, were also given on several occasions.

Redeployment

Five requests for the redeployment of five employees within the public sector in terms of Art 15A of the ETS Act were processed. These requests involved the redeployment of staff from the IPSL to EUPA, MIMCOL to MITA, Malta Shipyards to the IPSL, MEPA to MTA and ADT to MIMCOL.

EU Recruitment

Work in connection with recruitment at EU level concerned the filling of vacancies in the positions of Technical Attaché and Research Officers, and the Secondment of National Experts, together with calls for Temporary Agents with EU Institutions.

EU Fund Management Related Recruitment

Recruitment was made in the positions of EU Fund Managers and EU Fund Officers, the majority of whom were assigned to the Paying Agency and Rural Development Division within the MRRA and the PPCD. In addition, other EU related or co-financed recruitment included the positions of Cultural Contact Point and Project Manager (STEPS) in the Ministry for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport; Senior Manager (Rural Development), Risk Analysis Coordinator and Quality Control Manager within the Paying

Agency of the MRRA,; and Project Manager (ERDF Grant Scheme for Child Care Facilities) in the Department for Social Welfare Standards.

Recruitment in other Sectors

In the Health and Education sectors (particularly in new posts/positions created by virtue of the 2007 Education reform, in respect of the latter) an accentuated focus on recruitment was particularly visible. Other prominent sectors were the Resources and Rural Affairs, the Civil Aviation Department, Finance, Foreign Affairs (including additional recruitment in the number of Counsellors in view of Malta's role on the European External Action Service - EEAS), the Office of the Commissioner for Refugees, Local Government, the Government Property Division, the Public Registry and the Passport and Civil Registration Department.

Re-employment of Enrolled Nurses

Following consultations with the Public Service Commission, it was established that since the grade of Enrolled Nurse is a dying grade and that returnees are not afforded the opportunity of re-applying through a call for applications, ex-public officers who had held the grade of Enrolled Nurse and who wish to return in employment would be re-engaged through a direct recommendation by Permanent Secretary (HECC) to the PSC.

Comparative Analysis of the Public Service Classification Agreements conducted by the Joint Negotiating Team (JNT)

The Resourcing Department contributed towards the comprehensive Comparative Analysis exercise by assisting in the identification of those grades/positions listed in Classification Agreements, and which were proving problematic to fill.

Delegation of Recruitment

A Task Force composed of the Public Service Commission, the Resourcing Directorate, the OPM Policy Research Directorate, and the Management Efficiency Unit, was set up to implement the delegation of recruitment procedures to line ministries as contemplated in the Public Administration Act. The Task Force convened several times throughout the year, and carried out extensive work on the amendment of the PSC Regulations with a view to reflecting the transformed role of the PSC and the line departments, following the delegation of recruitment to line ministries. Draft directives and guidelines were formulated so as to assist line departments as they operate within a transformed role.

Casual Substitutes

In terms of the Casual Substitute Scheme previously in force, casual substitutes were paid the minimum point of the salary scale of the entry grade into which they were engaged - frozen as on date of engagement. The Scheme was amended in order to align casual substitutes with other officers who were engaged on contract at the minimum salary point but whose minimum salary point was not fixed but annually adjusted in terms of the financial estimates issued each year. The salary of casual substitutes has likewise been pegged to the minimum of the salary scale tied to the grade but will be annually adjusted in terms of the financial estimates issued each year. Moreover, since the PSMC also applies to casual substitutes by virtue of their public officers status, akin to other public officers, casual substitutes on a higher salary point should be entitled to retain that salary point if appointed to a substantive grade on a lower salary scale, provided the maximum of the highest salary scale of that grade is not exceeded.

Instrument of Delegation for the Re-Engagement/Engagement of Retired Public Officers/Retired Persons

The above Instrument of Delegation was created to empower line ministries to engage retired public officers, as well as retired persons who had never been in public service employment, in areas of skills shortages as determined by the Principal Permanent Secretary. Such re-engagement/engagement is made following a public advertisement of the areas concerned. To date this Delegation is applicable to the Health sector and in respect of the medical, nursing and midwifery professions.

Instrument of Delegation for the Extension/Termination of the Probationary Period

This Instrument of Delegation empowers Heads of Department to extend an officer's probationary period in cases of unpaid leave or work on reduced hours without referral to the PSC, and to extend or terminate for reasons of unsatisfactory performance, also without referral to the PSC. It is envisaged that this will reduce bureaucracy in cases where the probationary period of an officer needs to be extended or terminated.

Submission and Processing of Petitions

Another initiative aimed at reducing bureaucratic procedures involves the streamlining of the procedure for the submission and processing of petitions relating to selection processes. No distinction is to be made between petitions submitted by serving public officers and those made by applicants from outside the Public Service. Petitions, copied to the Head of Department where the vacancy is to be filled, are to be submitted directly to the Public Service Commission as a constitutional body autonomous from the Administration. Petitions must reach the Commission and the Head of Department within 10 working days from the date of publication in the Government Gazette of the notice of the issue of the result.

Guidelines to Selection Boards

After the PSC drew the attention of this Department to a number of issues regarding the selection process, an explanatory circular (MPO Circ. 120/2009) was issued to brief line departments on particular distinctions. These concerned the awarding of marks, particularly in view that in a number of cases only one mark - and in such subjective criteria as "Personal Qualities" - differentiated between the classification of the first-placed individual recommended for appointment and the next-placed candidate. Hence, before forwarding the report to the Commission, departments would be required to engage in specific scrutiny in cases resulting in ties, or where the difference in ranking order is that of one/two marks - especially if this arises in selection criteria that are subjective in nature and where the assessment of "Personality" is particularly involved. This is also applicable in the case of borderline failures.

The Commission also established an increased marking range according to the number of applicants. It also established the right of candidates to request a breakdown of marks under the set criteria and sub-criteria. Sub-criteria are to be set for all selection processes; indicated in the Board's report; and to be given only at a candidate's specific request and in respect of his/her performance during the interview.

Training Session for DCSs and HRMs

A half-day training session was organised for Directors of Corporate Services and HR Managers during which a presentation on the selection process for the filling of vacancies in the Public Service was delivered. Executive Secretary, Public Service Commission and Director (Citizenship and Expatriate Affairs) also made their contribution during this seminar.

Updates to the Public Service Management Code

Various updates to Chapter 1 of the PSMC concerning resourcing policies and procedures were made.

Extension of existing arrangements to Public Officers performing higher duties

An Agreement was reached in principle with the Public Service Commission to extend the policy of 'tenure in the grade', currently applicable to Headship and Assistant Director positions, to other officers assigned to perform higher duties (by virtue of a sectoral agreement), and who perform such higher duties for not less than six years. Thus, after performing the duties of a higher post for six years, such officers would be substantively appointed in the higher salary scale, as in the case of officers in Headship and Assistant Director positions.

Deployment of Public Officers with Entities

During 2009, 15 public officers were detailed and 19 public officers were deployed with public entities. 237 officers had their detailing order revoked as a result of demand driven requests, reorganisation, officers' own request, and following officers' selection to posts in the Public Service.

The following table shows the number of public officers, who were detailed or deployed with public entities as on 31 December, 2009:

Public Entity	Detailed/ Deployed/ Attached	No of public officers
Water Services Corporation	Detailed	684
Directorate of Educational Services	Detailed	25
Directorate for Quality & Standards in Education	Detailed	9
Enemalta Corporation	Detailed	1
EU Programmes Agency (EUPA)	Detailed	3
Heritage Malta	Detailed	151
Housing Authority	Detailed	18
Kunsill Malti għall-Ispirt	Detailed	37
Lotteries and Gaming Authority	Detailed	4
Malta Communications Authority	Detailed	12
Malta Council for Culture and the Arts	Detailed	23
Malta Environment & Planning Authority (MEPA)	Detailed	96
Malta Maritime Authority	Detailed	13
Malta Resources Authority	Detailed	11
Malta Standards Authority	Detailed	3
Malta Statistics Authority	Detailed	59
Malta Transport Authority (ADT)	Detailed	17
MCAST	Detailed	1
Medicines Authority	Detailed	13
National Archives	Detailed	10
National Commission for the Promotion of Equality	Detailed	1
National Commission Persons with Disability	Detailed	5
Occupational Health and Safety Authority	Detailed	5
Office of the Attorney General	Detailed	29
Superintendence of Cultural Heritage	Detailed	7
Barriera Tax Warehouses Ltd	Deployed	3
Foundation for Medical Services	Deployed	10
Foundation for Social Welfare Services	Deployed	83
Foundation for Tomorrow's Schools	Deployed	1
IPSL	Deployed	1
Malta Enterprise	Deployed	1
Malta Information Technology Agency	Deployed	4
Malta Qualifications Centre	Deployed	1
Malta Tourism Authority	Deployed	1
Maltco Lotteries	Deployed	1

MCAST	Deployed	55
Office of the Commissioner for Children	Deployed	2
Road Networks Ltd	Deployed	17
St John's Co-Cathedral Foundation	Deployed	1
WasteServ Ltd	Deployed	14
MEUSAC	Deployed	1
MEUSAC/MCESD (Gozo Regional Office)	Deployed	1
Malta Air Traffic Services (MATS) Ltd	Deployed	130
Total		1,564

ONGOING ANCILLARY ACTIVITIES

Data on ongoing ancillary activities during 2009 is shown in the following tables:

General Service progressions to a higher salary scale with the same grade subject to satisfactory performance	
Position	No
Senior Principal (Scale 7 to 6)	2
Principal (Scale 8 to 7)	10
(Scale 9 to 8)	3
(Scale 10 to 9)	87
Assistant Principal (Scale 11 to 10)	110
Executive Officer (Scale 14 to 13)	12
Clerk (Scale 16 to 15)	153
Messenger (Scale 17 to 16)	1
(Scale 18 to Scale 17)	1

Engagement of Consultants/Advisers on contract processed *	
New Contracts	2
Terminations	6
<i>*Process was taken over by the Management Support Directorate – figures shown are as at end March 2009</i>	

Movement of Staff to & from Private Secretariats	
General Service Grades	8
Departmental Grades	2

Appointment in Departmental, Technical & Industrial Grades and Contractual Positions	
Method	No
Following public calls for application	1,208
Following selection from service-wide calls	566
Following selection from departmental calls	57
After a number of years service in the grade	56
Direct recommendations	1

Movement of Staff approved by MPO	
General Service Grades	60
Departmental Grades	9
Technical Grades	13
Industrial Grades	23
Others	2

Others	
Assimilations	60
Re-designations	56
Renewals of contract	16

Category 'A' Appointments (*)	
Position	No
In an Acting Capacity	17
Assistant Director	24

General Service promotions to a higher grade in terms of the relevant provisions of the Addendum and the 1993 Classification Agreements, subject to satisfactory performance	
Position	No
Assistant Principal to Principal	35
Executive Officer to Assistant Principal	99
Clerk to Senior Clerk	206

General Service Appointments	
Grade	No
Senior Principal	95
Principal	234
Clerk	16

Calls for applications issued for Departmental, Technical & Industrial Grades and Contractual Positions	
Type of advert	No
Government Gazette	193
Service-wide MPO Circular	117
Department Circular	3

Recommendations to PSC in respect of Departmental/Technical/Industrial Grades and Contractual Positions	
Local Personnel	331
Expatriate Personnel	10

Movement of Staff within same Ministry approved by respective Permanent Secretary	
General Service Grades	18
Departmental Grades	2
Technical Grades	2
Industrial Grades	17
Others	1

Pension Files processed by the Department	
Departmental, Tech & Industrial Grades	324
General Service Grades	82

EMPLOYEE RELATIONS DIRECTORATE

The prime objective of the Employee Relations Directorate is to advise ministries and line departments on the effective management of the HR function, particularly with regard to employee relations. In line with this objective, the Employee Relations Directorate implemented the following initiatives.

Employee Support Programme (ESP)

The Public Administration acknowledges the significance of all its employees and is committed to promote their well being. It recognises that the effectiveness of its operations lies in the general well being of all its employees and that unaddressed personal, interpersonal and organisational problems may interfere with employees' performance. The Public Administration believes that, once identified at an early stage and referred for appropriate support, most of these problems may be resolved for the benefit of the employee concerned, the Public Administration, as well as the general public to whom public officers provide their services.

As one of its key initiatives, the Directorate introduced an Employee Support Programme for public employees. In this regard, an application was submitted for the co-financing of this project from EU funds, under the European Social Fund – Priority Axis 4 of Operational Programme II – *Empowering People for more jobs and a better quality of life*. This project was awarded a positive rating by the Project Selection Committee.

The programme, which is work-focused, aims to assist in the identification and resolution of problems that prevent employees from rendering peak performance at the place of work. This programme will therefore offer information, consultation, assessment and short-term counselling to officers who are undergoing problems related to mental and emotional health, family related problems, addictive behaviour, usury, sexual harassment and job stress and anxiety, and which are affecting their output at work as a consequence.

The Directorate established an ESP Unit to coordinate this programme and this Unit will be operating in liaison with different local voluntary organisations and agencies specialising in the field, namely Cana Movement, Foundation for Social Welfare Services, Kummissjoni Nazzjonali Persuni b'Dizabilità, Richmond Foundation, OASI and Hospice Movement.

Public Service Management Code (PSMC)

The 10th edition of the PSMC was published in electronic format. This edition incorporated all the regulations and policies in the sphere of employee relations and resourcing that had come into effect up to 23 October 2009.

The PSMC was restructured in order to take forward the Public Administration Act which will catalyse radical changes in the area of HR management. The PSMC was also streamlined and given a more user-friendly semblance. The 10th edition also facilitates access to six manuals that have been issued and are uploaded on the MPO website. These manuals are: the family friendly measures manual; manual on allowances payable to public officers; manual on social security contributions, benefits and pensions; Treasury pensions manual; handbook on opportunities to work outside the Public Service; glossary of organisational and management terms.

In this edition of the PSMC, Chapter 5, which deals with Social Security, was removed and is now available in the manual referred to above. The new Chapter 5 now contains all the family-friendly measures applicable in the Public Service. Chapter 11, a new chapter, outlines the procedure to be followed when dealing with cases of sexual harassment.

In-between PSMC editions, new policies and updates are uploaded in real time and included as references to the relevant circulars.

Voluntary Organisations (VOs)

A notice was published in the Government Gazette inviting VOs to request the release of public officers to work with them. Selection under this scheme is based on the following criteria: (i) the closeness of the link between the project or activity to which the VO proposes to assign the released officer and the priorities established by Government; (ii) clearly defined deliverables linked to set target dates set out in the VOs proposal; and (iii) the amount of government assistance which the VO in question is already receiving.

Public officers in Scale 6 or lower may be released on grounds of public policy to work with the VOs. Only one officer may be assigned to any VO. Release under this scheme is approved by MPO, in consultation with the relevant stakeholders including, where applicable, the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations. The released officers will be monitored by MPO to ensure conformity with the terms of release, including the ongoing progress of the presented project/activity. To this effect, spot checks may be carried out and/or reports on the activities may be required. The period of release is for the duration of the project or for one year (whichever is the shortest) with the possibility of renewal.

Following the publication of this notice, 30 applications from VOs were received. After evaluating these applications in terms of to the established criteria, 23 public officers were released. 18 of these public officers had already been released in the previous year.

Discipline

An audit on the application of the Disciplinary Regulations by line departments during 2008 was carried out on the basis of the returns on discipline submitted by line departments. The results were collated in a report entitled *Survey and report on disciplinary cases in the Public Service for 2008*. Apart from giving a statistical digest of disciplinary cases initiated in 2008, this report identifies trends and also compares the 2008 figures with the figures of previous years.

The Employee Relations Directorate also continued to extend its support to line departments in the management of disciplinary cases. This was done in various ways, namely by:

- issuing directives and advice to line departments on the interpretation, management and processing of disciplinary cases;
- regular auditing of the application of the Disciplinary Regulations in line departments and the pursuit of corrective action whenever necessary;
- consulting the Public Service Commission on the interpretation of a number of provisions of the Disciplinary Regulations;
- delivering lectures organised by Staff Development Organisation to health sector employees on the *Disciplinary Procedures at the place of work*; and
- organising a seminar for Directors (Corporate Services), HR Managers and officers responsible for the processing of disciplinary cases in line departments.

In order to extend support to Heads of Department in disciplinary matters, the Directorate re-engaged a lawyer to assist them in the drafting of disciplinary charges and the presentation of cases before disciplinary boards and the PSC.

Following consultations held with the relative stakeholders, the following policy decisions in the area of discipline were taken by the Directorate:

- The Commissioner of Police should only report to Heads of Department contraventions allegedly committed at the place of work of a public officer or when the contraventions are directly related to the officers' duties.

- Records of disciplinary action taken in terms of the Maltapost Collective Agreement against public officers who have reverted to the Public Service, should not be entered in the officers' Personal Record Sheet nor in the Service and Leave Record.
- Whenever a public officer is dismissed from the Public Service, the Directorate will inform the officer concerned about the re-integration policy. This will however be done without prejudice to the way the officer's application for re-integration may eventually be decided upon by the Re-Integration Committee.

Reduced Hours

The policy regarding work on reduced hours is one of the cornerstones of Government's family-friendly measures. This policy has proved beneficial to employees and management. The Directorate felt that certain aspects of this policy should be fine-tuned to allow greater flexibility and accessibility so that employees wishing to adopt a reduced time-table would have greater opportunity to do so. The key changes introduced were:

- The number of hours worked per week may vary between 20 to 35 hours, to the nearest hour, per week and officers may work on a different time-table in Winter and Summer.
- Urgent family leave of 16 hours to be availed of in not more than 4 sessions.
- Public officers on reduced hours may not perform private work even after official hours. However, work after official hours in government employment may be allowed subject to the recommendation of the Permanent Secretary concerned.
- In exceptional circumstances when public officers on reduced hours are required to work beyond their usual number of weekly hours, they are paid at the hourly rate for the extra hours worked. Extra hours worked that exceed the weekly hours worked by a full-time counterpart are paid at overtime rates.

Re-employment and Re-instatement

The policy document entitled *Re-Integration of public officers* which outlines the parameters for the re-instatement of public officers who retired on medical grounds and the re-employment of public officers who either resigned or were dismissed on disciplinary grounds was fine-tuned.

To avoid the use of surplus words the term 're-integration' has been replaced by the terms 're-employment and re-instatement'. The key changes introduced were:

- all public officers (thus removing the distinction for members of disciplined forces) may be re-instated/re-employed in the Public Service, so however that if it is in the public interest, they may be placed in another grade;
- in case of the re-employment of officers who were dismissed due to misuse of drugs, their probation would be for a period of 48 months;
- if it is in the public interest or on humanitarian grounds that a re-employed person be deployed in a grade or position different to the area held by that person before dismissal, he would, before deployment, be submitted for skills profiling/retaining;
- in deserving cases and when the officer seeking re-employment is able to prove that resignation was brought about by grave family-related problems, the re-instatement/re-employment committee may recommend the recognition of previous service;
- public officers in the nursing grades who resigned (whether for humanitarian reasons or not) would be treated in terms of the Collective Agreement on Nursing Grades; and
- applicants who before their application for re-employment would have been resigned or would have been medically boarded out for five years or over, would need to undergo an assessment interview to ensure that the applicant's level of competence and any required certification in the particular grade are still acceptable.

Treasury Pension rights

A Legal Notice was published declaring the Malta Transport Authority (ADT) as a public entity falling under Article 8A of the Pensions Ordinance. By virtue of this Legal Notice, the service of pensionable public officers who take up permanent employment with this entity will be reckoned as service with the Public Service. Thus, public officers who were detailed with ADT after 1 April 2002 and who take up permanent employment with ADT will, on retirement, be entitled to a Treasury pension based on the analogous public service substantive grade, capped at Salary Scale 3.

Other measures

During the period under review, the following action was taken by the Employee Relations Directorate:

- Issued a clarification that all government employees (including employees in the public sector), whether full-time or part-time and whether engaged on a fixed or indefinite basis, are entitled to the family-friendly measures. In the case of government employees engaged on a fixed-term basis, the family-friendly measures will only run up to the term of engagement;
- A policy decision was taken to amend the relevant provision of the PSMC concerning paternity leave. Male public officers are now entitled to two working days paid leave on the birth of each of their children whereas previously, male public officer were only entitled to two days on the birth of a child to their wife;
- A policy decision was taken to release public officers who represent civil society organisations to attend the core meetings of MEUSAC sectoral committees which are held during office hours;
- Encouraged Heads of Department to nominate suitable officers to attend Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) courses organised by the OHS Authority;
- Released a number of public officers from their duties to train for the GSSE Games 2009;
- The Data Protection HR Corporate Procedures were amended in order that when a public officer is acquitted of a disciplinary charge the relevant discipline file would be destroyed after the lapse of two months.

Industrial Relations

The Industrial Relations Unit (IR Unit) continued to cultivate the good relations that exist between Government, in its capacity as an employer, and the various unions representing different employee categories in the Public Service.

In order to maintain this relationship the Unit pursued a pro-active approach in the management of industrial relations. The Industrial Relations Unit operated in a very flexible manner to facilitate industrial stability as much as possible. To this effect, various meetings with unions were carried out on a regular basis.

During the period under review, the Unit was involved in the negotiation and successful conclusion of the following:

- Memorandum of Understanding with MUT regarding Kindergarten Assistants;
- Memorandum of Understanding with MUT regarding Supply Teachers;
- Interim Agreement with UHM regarding Pharmacist Class; and
- Interim Agreement regarding the Internal Audit and Investigation Directorate.

In June 2009, the Principal Permanent Secretary together with the Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Investment commissioned the Joint Negotiation Team to carry out a comparative analysis of the public service sectoral agreements. The Industrial Relations Unit was actively involved in all the stages of the comparative analysis. This exercise was concluded in December 2009.

Together with the Director responsible for Public Health, Senior Manager Industrial Relations was also assigned the task of setting up and coordinating an information meeting with all registered trade unions and

employers' associations. The objective of this meeting was to ensure that the dissemination of information regarding the H1N1 virus was updated and current.

Statistics

The following table shows the total number of cases handled by the Employee Relations Directorate during 2009:

Cases handled by Employee Relations Directorate	
Conditions of Service	1,367
Discipline & Staff Welfare	206
Pensions	104
Total	1,677

Disciplinary cases initiated in 2007 under the 1999 Disciplinary Regulations by line departments	
Description of Punishments	No
Regulation 18 Admonishment	114
Regulation 19 Summary Warning	243
Regulation 20 Minor	65
Regulation 20 Serious	143
Total	565

Cases of Conditions of Service handled	
Deputising Allowance	34
Qualification Allowance	32
Unpaid Leave	123
Cultural Leave	70
Remuneration to Gov Boards & Committees	7
Medical Boards	77
Trade Union Activities	160
Overseas Development Aid	16
VOs	76
Unpaid Leave - EU	46
Re-integration	71
Gender Issues	180
Others	475
Total	1,367

HR SYSTEMS AND DATA MANAGEMENT DIRECTORATE

The functions of the HR Systems and Data Management Directorate for the year under review included the following:

- providing support to line departments administering the Human Resource Information Management Systems (HRIMS);;
- preparatory work in anticipation of the implementation of the new payroll system across the Public Service;
- improvement to and implementation of the Performance Management Programme to enhance employee performance in line with approved output and pre-determined quality standards;
- administration and support in connection with the Public Service Recruitment Portal;
- improving the competence of Human Resource Managers and Directors of Corporate Services in the area of Human Resource Management through regularly organised fora;
- the preparatory work and implementation of a Skills Profiling Exercise across the Public Administration;
- responsibility for the governance of the Government Payroll (Since November);
- representing the Maltese Public Service in the Human Resources Working Group (HRWG) of the European Union Public Administration Network (EUPAN)

New HR/Payroll System for the Public Service

A joint team between MPO, MITA and Treasury tested the new system. A number of PCs at various sites were set up to simulate a number of users. Various tests and reports were carried out and timings noted. Following the satisfactory completion of all the technical tests, Dakar Systems Limited was awarded the tender. In view that the back office operations of the payroll function are conducted in Gozo, a high-level meeting was held with the Permanent Secretary, Ministry for Gozo. During the meeting, the system's Implementation Plan, MPO's policy direction and the support structure in operation during the implementation stage were discussed in detail.

Dakar held familiarisation sessions and detailed overviews on the system with MITA, the Gozo Salaries Section and MPO. A number of functionalities and processes not incorporated in the system, but likewise

required, were identified. These items were listed in a 'Needs Definition' document which was discussed by the Project Board. Priorities were set for these functionalities to be included in either Phase 1 or Phase 2 of the project. In the meantime, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Customs Division were selected as pilot sites for the testing of the new system.

Attendance Verification Systems (AVS)

In order to establish the number of attendance verification devices required in the various line ministries, between January and March 2009 the directorate compiled information submitted by line ministries on AVSs already in place and AVSs procured. Additionally, it also collated information on the number of buildings/sites within each ministry where these devices were planned to be installed. The aim of this exercise was to assist MPO in its decision on the best way forward, and this in terms of the provisions of Article 8.4 of the Collective Agreement for Employees in the Public Service for the years 2005 - 2010. In September, an OPM circular was issued, outlining the process for the procurement, allocation and operation of attendance verification systems across ministries and departments. Through an enabling framework, an approved list of AVS suppliers and systems as well as standard procurement and maintenance contracts would be made available. This would ensure that the procured systems and devices would not only be in sync across Government but capable of being integrated with the new Payroll/HR System. AVS Guidelines and Data Protection Requirements for AVSs were also prepared and attached to this circular. This tender is expected to be issued in the first quarter of 2010.

HR Audits

In conjunction with a private consultancy firm, this office undertook an ambitious training exercise which was aimed at building the directorate's competence in the area of Human Resources Auditing across Government. The main objective of these HR Audits revolves around the need to test and match staff complements and staff competencies with the workloads and tasks being performed by their respective department/section. Following the completion of each exercise and the identification of audit outcomes, the team would then be in a position to identify gaps, provide guidance and suggest corrective measures. The first HR Audit exercise was conducted within the three directorates making up the Management and Personnel Office.

Skills Profiling Exercise

In its Flexicurity Strategy, one of the pillars of Malta's National Reform Programme, Government committed itself to undertake a skills audit of the national working population. To this effect, the Public Administration is aiming to complete a skills audit of its workforce by November 2010. The objective of this exercise is twofold: (i) to provide management with the necessary information to enable it to take informed decisions and (ii) to assist management in determining the training needs of the public administration workforce for the increased efficiency and effectiveness in the provision of public services.

With the collaboration of the Management Efficiency Unit (MEU), the directorate was entrusted with the planning, formulation and implementation of a skills profiling exercise across the Public Administration. The strategy adopted by this office included the involvement of the Directors (Corporate Services) and HR Managers, particularly where assistance needed to be given to employees experiencing difficulties in filling and completing the skills profiling questionnaire. In fact, a number of potential trainers were identified by HR Managers and were trained for this specific purpose. 65 officers attended the actual training sessions.

During October - December 2009, IT security-related issues were cleared with MITA and the launching of skills profiling exercise was announced in OPM Circular 20/2009.

DCS and HR Managers Seminar/Fora

During the third week of March 2009, this Directorate organised a two-day seminar for HR Managers and Directors performing corporate functions. During the seminar a number of issues cutting across all MPO directorates were raised. These included:

- Skills Profiling;
- Attendance Verification Systems;
- Recruitment Portal;
- Legal Notice 51/07 & Persons of Trust over the age of 61;
- Recruitment procedures in the Public Sector;
- Certification of Performance;
- Revisions and restructuring of the PSMC;
- Substance Abuse Policy;
- Flexibility in Work Schedules.

Another forum for Directors Corporate Services was held on 9 September 2009, with specific attention to the issue of Teleworking in the Public Service. Various speakers addressed the attendees and discussed different perspectives on this matter. The Employee Relations Directorate presented an overview of the teleworking policy and Director General, Ministry for Social Policy shared his experiences on how the teleworking policy was adopted and implemented in his department. The Resourcing Directorate conducted a presentation on MPO's policy for the handling of employees' requests for transfer to departments or ministries where teleworking is available.

A conjoint forum for Directors Corporate Services and HR Managers was held on 11 December 2009. Various presentations were conducted during this forum. The first presentation regarding the new Dakar system for the Public Service was conducted by a MITA business analyst. The presentation included a detailed explanation of the implementation process of the new Payroll. Consequently, the Operations Manager at Dakar Systems presented an overview of the Dakar HR System. Director General, Contracts Division, delivered a presentation on the Reform of Public Procurement.

Human Resources Working Group (HRWG)

Director HRS & DM represented the Maltese Public Service in the Human Resources Working Group (HRWG) of the European Union Public Administration Network. During the meeting held in Prague in April 2009, a number of matters were discussed. These included an update of the EUPAN Handbook, stress at the workplace, and the anticipation of change as a result of the electronisation of Public Administration. Discussions were also held on the Learning Team project which Malta will be actively participating in. Two meetings of the HRWG of the European Union Public Administration Network (EUPAN) were held in Stockholm and in Malmo, in September and November 2009 respectively. During the meeting held in Stockholm, a number of issues were discussed. These included sustainable development in Public Administration, Public ethos, Women in top positions within the Central Administration, EUPAN's medium term priorities and Managing Performance – lessons from administrative reforms in public administrations. During the meeting held in Malmo the items discussed mainly focused on Social Dialogue Traditions in Europe, European Pension Reforms, EUPAN's medium term priorities and Horizontal Government Coordination.

Human Resources Working Group Learning Team (Human Resources Assessment)

This Directorate represented the Maltese Public Service in the first meeting of the Learning Team (Human Resources Assessment) held on 15 October 2009 in Brussels. The next meeting is expected to be held via web-conferencing in the first week of February, 2010.

Performance Management Programme (PMP)

During the second quarter of 2009 the Directorate initiated the annual PMP Compliance Audits for government employees. As in previous years, these were carried out in conjunction with the HR Managers of the respective ministries. Notwithstanding that the PMP is a valuable information tool, delays in PMP compliance and submissions were still noted. However, a downward trend was also evident.

PMP Quality Audits for General Service Grades were also carried out throughout the year. As part of the promotion/progression processes, the Resourcing Directorate submitted a total of 536 PMP documents for auditing. The majority of the PMP documents were properly filled in and were submitted on time. About 9% of PMPs had to be referred back to HR managers owing to missing or incomplete performance measurement indicators or signatures. Respective supervisors were instructed to assist officers in filing and completing PMP documents properly.

Family-Friendly Measures Survey 2009

As in previous years, the Directorate issued its annual survey on family-friendly measures availed of across the Public Administration. The main objective of this survey is to determine the number of recipients utilising family-friendly options, the categorisation of policy preferences, and the rate of take-up by ministry and by gender. Yearly results are then compared, trends are identified, and where necessary data is utilised for the further development of the work-life balance policy domain.

Other Matters/Activities

- Assistant Director Policy and Planning attended a GIDD Commonwealth sponsored training seminar in the Civil Service College of Singapore between 9 and 20 February 2009. This training course, entitled *Managing Public Sector Performance* focused on the various aspects of Performance Management with special reference to the Public Service of Singapore.
- Between April and June 2009 the Directorate held a number of meetings with the Information Management Unit (OPM) in preparation for the new MPO website. The new website is expected to be launched in the first quarter of 2010.
- Following a general request from line departments, two training sessions on the functions of the Front-End and the Back-End of the Public Service Recruitment Portal were held. The training of 30 persons was conducted in conjunction with the Staff Development Organisation.

EMPLOYMENT STATISTICS

Appendices A to D show:

- A Comparison report - Public Service Workforce - December 2008/2009;
- B Distribution of Public Service Employees by Category and Gender as on December 2009;
Average Age by Grade and Gender in the General Service Class as on December 2009;
- C Employees who terminated their employment from the Public Service January-December 2009;
PMP Compliance by Employees in the General Service Class during 2009;
- D Recruitment against Terminations in the Public Service (1999-2009).

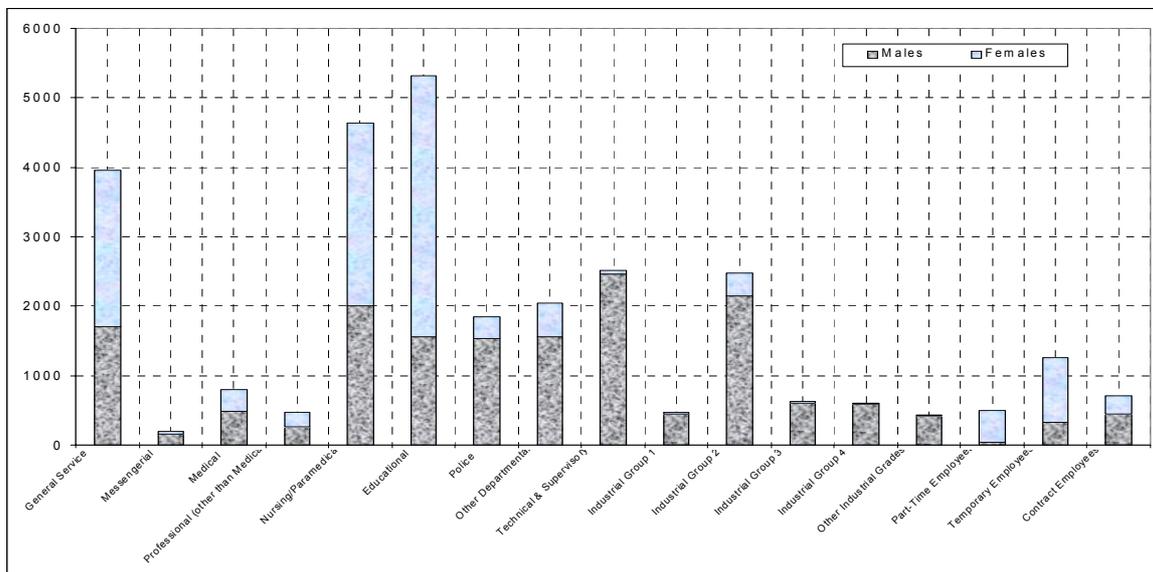
DR GODWIN GRIMA
Principal Permanent Secretary

APPENDIX A

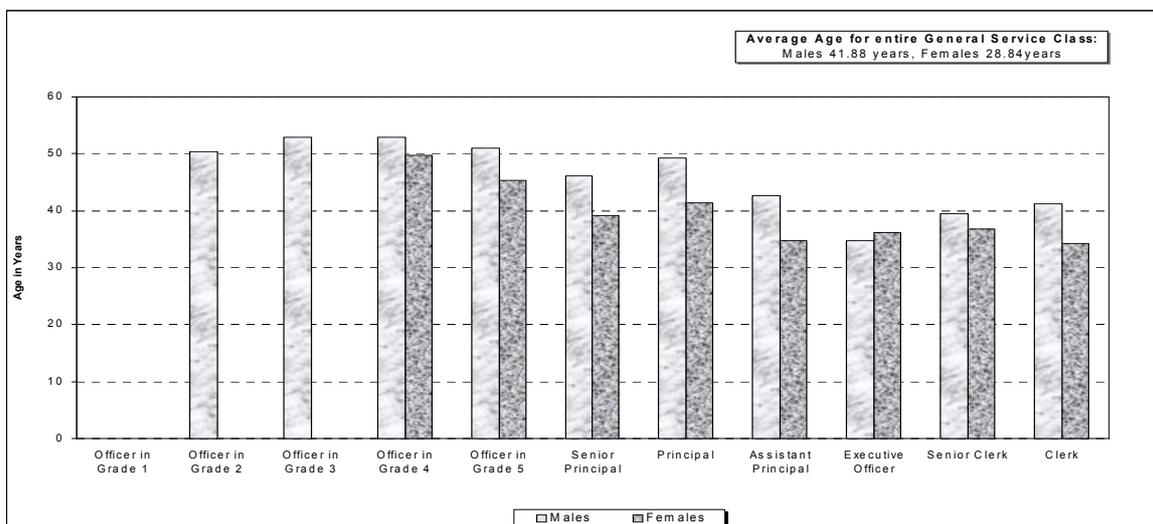
Public Service Workforce (including AFM uniformed personnel and Public Service employees seconded/detailed to authorities/ public entities) December 2008/2009			
Category		Dec 2008	Dec 2009
Full-time Public Service Employees			
Administrative & Clerical		3,751	3,801
Messengerial		216	190
Police Force		1,888	1,852
Technical		2,027	2,041
Professional (Other than Medical)		422	433
Nursing/Paramedical		4,380	4,643
Medical		783	790
Educational		5,153	5,324
Other Departmental Grades		1,628	1,800
Industrial		<u>4,460</u>	<u>4,155</u>
		24,708	25,029
Armed Forces (Uniformed)			
Regular Force		1,504	1,563
Revenue Security Corps		124	119
Reserve Force		46	48
Volunteer Force		<u>24</u>	<u>20</u>
		1,698	1,750
Temporary Employees			
Part-Time		494	497
Casual		1,284	1,261
On contract (Local and Foreign)		847	697
Trainees		<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>
		2,628	2,456
Public Officers with Authorities/Public Entities		1,746	1,415
Grand Total		<u>30,780</u>	<u>30,650</u>

APPENDIX B

Distribution of Public Service employees by Category and Gender as on 31 December 2009

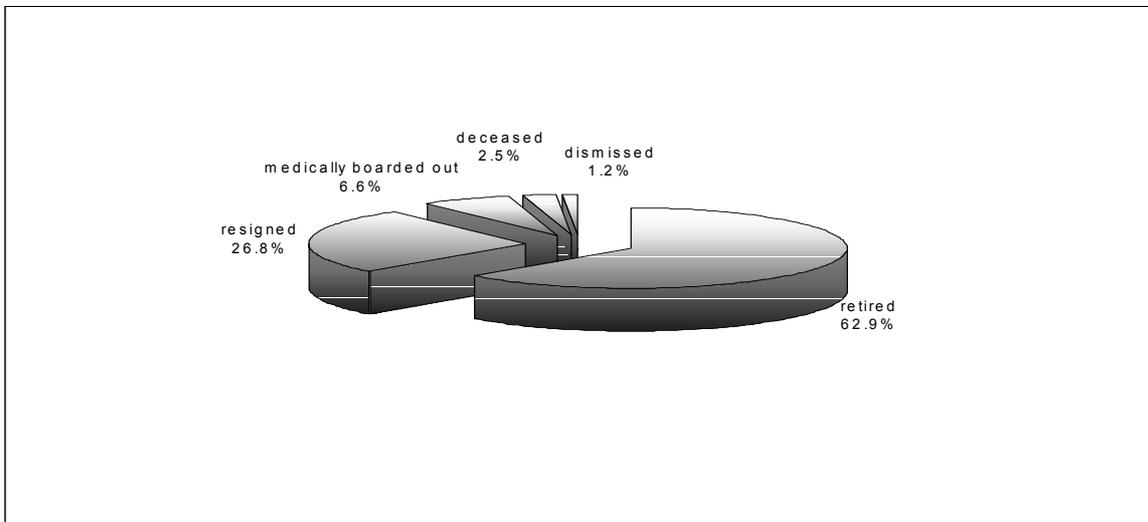


Average age by Grade and Gender in the General Service Class as on 31 December 2009 (all grades shown substantively)

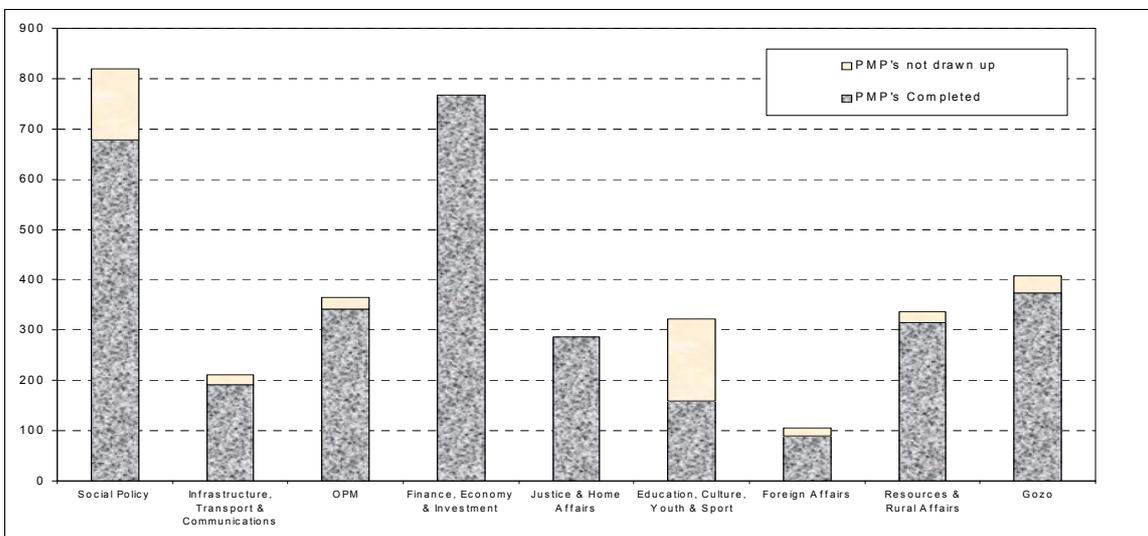


APPENDIX C

**Employees who terminated their employment from the Public Service
January - December 2009**



PMP Compliance by Employees in the General Service Class during 2009



APPENDIX D

Recruitment against terminations in the Public Service (1999-2009)

Armed Forces of Malta

GENERAL

During the period under review, the Armed Forces of Malta (AFM) continued with the execution of its primary roles that of maintaining the territorial integrity of the Maltese archipelago and safeguarding national interests in general through, amongst other things, constant surveillance on land, by air and out at sea.

In 2009, the AFM proceeded with its development in terms of operational capabilities. This thanks to a number of procurement programmes that allowed it to consolidate further its presence on the international scene. This was also the year during which Malta assumed the Presidency of the 5+5 Defence Initiative.

ROLES

The AFM is tasked to perform two defence roles:

- *Primary Defence Role:* The AFM is responsible for the external security and integrity of the Maltese Islands in peacetime and in crisis.
- *Secondary Defence Role:* The AFM provides military support in specified areas to the Police Force on a regular basis and to other Government Departments when required.

Primary Defence Roles

- Maintain territorial integrity (particularly at the Malta International Airport and other sensitive locations)
- Maintain integrity of the Maltese waters (physical and electronic surveillance against smuggling, illegal trafficking of immigrants and law breaking at sea)
- Provide for the limited surveillance of the Maltese airspace
- Provide search and rescue services in Malta and its Search and Rescue Region
- Provide Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) and Improvised Explosive Device Disposal (IEDD) cover
- Contribute towards international peace and stability by participating in overseas crisis management operations

Secondary Defence Roles

- Provide military assistance to government departments and the civil community
- Provide civil emergency protection support (explosives, marine pollution, floods and other disasters)
- Provide military aid to Malta's Police Force and the Security Services (Internal Security, Anti-narcotic patrols and vehicle checkpoints)
- Provide state ceremonial and other public duties

OPERATIONS

Local

The AFM conducted a number of operations in fulfilment of its roles; key point protection with strategic locations and the provision of Vehicle Check Points and patrols aimed at curbing illegal activities being two of them. In this regard, particular emphasis was put on curbing drug trafficking.

Compared to the previous year, 2009 proved relatively quiet as regards illegal immigrants arriving in Malta. FRONTEX Joint Operation Nautilus 09 nevertheless took place from April till October, during what is termed as the busy period in terms of arrivals. On land, the AFM continued to contribute in the effort to combat the phenomenon by hosting thousands at two closed centres at Safi and Lyster Barracks. The AFM also continued to provide the Detention Service a number of officers and other ranks.

The AFM, together with other Mediterranean EU Member States also progressed with the implementation of the European Patrols Network (EPN). This is a FRONTEX initiative aimed at further developing and strengthening the coordination between member states through inter alia, enhanced networks and appropriate structures.

Law enforcement was also carried out at sea with regard to both illegal hunting and illegal fishing. Additionally, as part of the EU-coordinated Blue Fin Tuna Joint deployment plan, AFM assets provided eight days of surface patrolling and approximately sixty flight hours between May and July 2009. During these deployments, a number of inspections were conducted and numerous minor and serious infringements were noted and reported to the European Union's Commission's Fisheries Control Agency.

Overseas

The AFM continued to support international peace and stability through its participation in the EU's Monitoring Mission in Georgia and its anti-piracy operation off the Somali Coast.

It was in September 2008, that the AFM made its first operational deployment in support of an EU crisis management operation. Then, an Officer and a Senior Non-Commissioned Officer had been deployed at very short notice as part of the EU's Monitoring Mission. The AFM has sustained this deployment with two personnel ever since.

It was also during 2008, that an AFM Officer was deployed to the Operational Headquarters of EU NAVFOR ATALANTA, the operation contributing to the deterrence, prevention and repression of acts of piracy off the Somali Coast. This deployment was sustained throughout 2009.

Following a decision by the EU to reactivate its Border Assistance Mission in Rafah, the AFM offered two Non-Commissioned to serve as Malta's Force offering towards this mission. In 2009 two AFM members remained on stand-by to deploy in theatre at a fourteen days notice to move.

The AFM also continued its support to the OSCE by providing qualified inspectors to act as assistants during inspections held in the Balkans in support of the Dayton Peace Accords.

For the third successive year, the AFM participated in the FRONTEX coordinated operation 'Poseidon 2009'. The operation aims at assisting the Greek authorities in containing the flow of illegal migrants from the East. The AFM deployed two teams from C (Special Duties) Company to the Greek islands of Lesbos and Samos between August and October. These AFM personnel were tasked with the manning of observation posts along the island's coastlines in order to report activities at sea. It is expected that the AFM will continue giving its support to this operation during the first quarter of 2010.

TRAINING

Recruitment

Three recruitment programmes took place during the period under review; one for Officer Cadets and two for regular soldiers. Ten Officer Cadets commenced their local training phase in May. Of these, four dropped out and were replaced by another two on the waiting list. By December 2009, four of the eight enlisted had commenced overseas officer training in the Republic of Ireland.

On the same date that the Officer Cadetship commenced, 46 recruits were enlisted, 39 of who 'passed out' in August 2009. Subsequently an additional 60 recruits were enlisted under Scheme B. During this training phase, swimming training was introduced for recruits. Having followed periods of instruction, this allowed them to complete an AFM swimming qualifying test. In December, 53 of these recruits 'passed out', having successfully completed the course.

During 2009, the AFM issued a number of calls for application and renewal of contract for civilian personnel with particular specialist qualifications. These calls included that of a marine engineer, aircraft maintenance engineer and an airworthiness standard officer.

Exercises

The AFM Rapid Deployment Team (RDT) and Offshore Patrol Vessel (OPV) P61 took part in Exercise PHOENIX EXPRESS 09, a joint command exercise focussing on interoperability amongst navies stationed in the Mediterranean and Atlantic Seas. Particular focus was on law enforcement and interdiction operations. Initially the RDT participated in preparatory training at the NATO Maritime Operations Training Centre (NMIOTC) in Souda Bay Greece then deployed on board to conduct boarding operations. P61 participated during the 6-day underway period east of Malta, conducting such serials as VERTREP with various helicopters, boarding, communication exercises, and manoeuvring.

This year's edition of Exercise CANALE, a Malta/Italy bilateral maritime exercise to which all 5+5 member states are invited, was held off Sicily between 18 and 25 September. The aim was to train personnel in joint search and rescue and law enforcement at sea. Participation from member states of the 5+5 Defence Initiative was very encouraging.

During November, 28 AFM members were attached with an Italian Unit in Brunico, Trento. The aim of this attachment was to enhance interoperability with the Italian Army for eventual deployment in overseas crisis management operations. The training also provided participants with an opportunity to operate in an environment and climatic condition that is very different from what they are used to.

Education and Trades

The AFM continued with its efforts to improve the education level of its personnel by providing training in the various trades available within the Force. Lectures in Map Reading were conducted, culminating with exams in June. This enabled soldiers who already held certificates in Maltese, English and Mathematics acquire an Army Certificate of Education Class I and II, mandatory for their advancement.

Several Trade Testing Boards were convened to assess proficiency. Those tested were a mixture of new soldiers undergoing initial training in their trades (Class III) and long serving members seeking to better their trade qualification (Classes I and II). In 2009, 15 Trade Testing Boards were convened.

Training Overseas

Overseas training opportunities were various. Personnel from the AFM attended IMET funded courses in the US. Others attended courses offered by the Italy. These focused on infantry, engineering, maritime and other technological subjects. AFM personnel also attended Peace Support Operations training related courses in the Czech Republic offered by the UK. At present, an AFM officer is following a 42-week long Advanced Command and Staff Course also offered by the UK.

Following discussions with the Irish Department of Defence during 2008, the AFM was allocated land and naval cadetship vacancies for courses commencing in November 2009. The Land Cadetship course is fifteen months long whilst the Naval Cadetship course takes four years. Currently the AFM has three officer cadets in Ireland.

The Irish Department of Defence also offered the AFM two vacancies on the Senior Command and Staff Course and one vacancy on the Junior Command and Staff Course in 2010. The Senior Command and Staff course is for officers holding the rank of Major and is earmarked to be held between September 2010 and June 2011. The Junior Command and Staff Courses are aimed for officers holding the rank of Captain and are scheduled to take place between February and July of 2010. The AFM will be availing itself of this opportunity in 2010.

Training Local

A number of courses run in-house by AFM instructors took place, in some cases with the assistance of the Italian Military Mission (marksmanship and sensitive sites security courses). Other courses were provided by Mobile Training Teams, particularly from the United States Coast Guard on maritime law enforcement.

A number of Command, Leadership and Management Training Courses for NCOs were held. These courses aim at developing leadership qualities and skills and to provide attendees a wider knowledge of select military subjects and topics required to fulfil their role.

Search and Rescue Training Centre

The AFM Search and Rescue Training Centre has been successfully operating for the past four years and offers specialised training in search and rescue operations. The centre is operated by the AFM and is funded by US European Command (EUCOM) and organises courses for both local and foreign Search and Rescue Operators. During the period under review, a number of local and foreign students attended the courses organised.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

European Security and Defence Policy

The year under review saw the AFM continuing its participation in overseas deployments by maintaining its commitment towards supporting the EU's Monitoring Mission to Georgia and its anti-piracy operation off the coast of Somalia, whilst also monitoring events in the Gaza strip with a view of deploying two AFM members once the EU's mission thereat is reactivated.

NATO/Partnership for Peace (PfP)

Following the re-activation of Malta's membership in the Partnership for Peace (PfP), the year 2009 saw Malta presenting to NATO an updated version of its Presentation Document and Individual Partnership Programme for 2008 and 2009. The Individual Partnership Programme includes those priority areas that Malta wants to cooperate on with other countries members of the PfP.

The AFM during 2009 also reviewed the list of exercises and training opportunities organised by NATO for partner countries. The AFM envisages its participation in a multi-national exercise in the near future.

United Nations

The AFM deals with all UN originating military related correspondence and completed all UN related national returns that involve the AFM.

Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)

The AFM regularly contributes to the OSCE by sending qualified personnel as part of inspection teams in support to Dayton Peace Accords in order to contribute to the confidence building measures undertaken by

the organisation in the Balkans region. This year's contribution consisted of three AFM officers participating in such inspections and one officer participating in an inspection visit to Irish military facilities in accordance with the OSCE's Vienna Document '99. All OSCE military related national returns were completed by the AFM.

5+5 Defence Initiative

In May 2009, Libya handed over the initiative's Presidency to Malta. During its Presidency term, Malta will be promoting the issue of interoperability in the field of search and rescue by organising a specialist seminar on the subject. During the first six months of Malta's Presidency term, the biannual initiative's Steering Committee was held in Malta in November, the AFM assisted the Defence Matters Directorate in the organisation and running of the meeting.

Visits

In 2009, the AFM hosted a number of distinguished visitors. These included a visit to the AFM's Maritime Squadron by the Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr Ban Ki-Moon. A few weeks after he took oath, HE the President of Malta visited Luqa Barracks. Other important visitors include the Chairman of the European Union's Military Committee, General Henri Bentégeat and the Chairman of NATO's Military Committee, Admiral Giampaolo di Paola.

Maritime Safety and Security Centre

Following discussions during which the US informed that they intend to fund the project, the AFM provided a business plan to develop the current AFM Search and Rescue Training Centre into a Maritime Safety and Security Training Centre. The plan also involved the identification of infrastructure to support this proposal. The business plan was submitted and two sites were identified and detailed drawings of the plans were finalised and presented. The first part of the curriculum is also underway. In November, the project suffered a setback as funding was withdrawn due to cutbacks by the US Government, however it is now back on track.

LOGISTICS

Major Procurements

The AFM embarked on three major projects that will enhance its operational capability and assist it further in its efforts. These were the procurement of an ultra modern Integrated Communications System (ICS), four brand new Inshore Patrol Vessels (IPVs) and one fixed-wing maritime patrol aircraft. The AFM also commenced an evaluation process for the acquisition of a pre-owned twin-engine helicopter.

A new and modern communications system has been a requirement for some time. It was therefore with anticipation that the ICS project took off towards the end of 2008, following requests for proposals and a response by four companies in early 2009. These were invited to submit bids as per technical specifications required which invitation solicited response from two of the interested parties. The evaluation process to which the bids were submitted resulted in the award of a contract to Messrs Aeronautics Ltd of Israel. The system was installed late in 2009 and should be tested and commissioned by the first quarter of 2010.

Following the publication of the tender dossier for the procurement of four Inshore Patrol Boats in late 2008, and the award of the tender in February 2009 to Austal Pty Ltd, constant communication between the company and the AFM was maintained throughout the year. This was done in order to ensure that the necessary feedback to the regular requests made by the shipyard was relayed back in a timely manner. This communication was crucial to keep the project on track. This was also augmented by regular visits by

AFM personnel to Austal Pty Ltd shipyard through the year. This also included sea trials and numerous tests until the performance results of the vessels were deemed acceptable by the AFM. The four IPBs are expected to be delivered to the AFM during the first quarter of 2010.

With regard to the procurement of a Maritime Patrol Aircraft (MPA) for the purpose of increasing the AFM's capability in maritime surveillance, a tender was issued in January 2009 and subsequently awarded to Aerodata AG in August. The tender included an option for the AFM to procure a second MPA with the same specifications and subject to the availability of funds from the European Borders Fund project for the year 2010. It is expected that the project will run from October 2009 up to February 2011.

Projects

During the year, a number of projects were terminated, some were ongoing and some saw their commencement. Works on the connection of the Detention Service compound to Lyster Barracks' main sewer system were completed in November. Also, works on the installation of a new radio mast at Lyster Barracks as part of the AFM's new integrated communication system were completed towards the end of the year.

On the other hand, works on Pembroke Barracks, the Maritime Squadron's Administration Block and Quay Project, and the proposed conversion of a disused underground pit for diesel tanks in Luqa Barracks to a water reservoir are ongoing. The former two are expected to be completed by 2010.

In April, an inspection of the Bridge outside Mosta Fort was conducted by Malta's Superintendent of Fortifications and an Architect from Heritage Malta Restoration Unit, with the intent of restoring the bridge. A technical report on the restoration process of the bridge is expected to be forwarded to the AFM in 2010.

Equipment donated by the Italian Military Mission to Malta

Towards the end of 2009 the Italian Military Mission donated approximately €4 million worth of military hardware and equipment. The varied equipment includes light to medium transport vehicles like staff cars, ambulances, coaches, and off-road troop carrier vans, and heavy plant machinery like bulldozers, excavators, cranes and large tipper trucks. Also donated by the IMM were other important stores, spare part supplies and kit items related to demining and combat engineering, radio communications, anti-Nuclear-Biological-Chemical warfare, and maritime workshop equipment, which will all go a long way in supporting the AFM's roles, operations and duties in Malta.

ADMINISTRATION AND PERSONNEL

Promotions

During 2009, two Captains were promoted to Major and one Lieutenant was promoted to Captain. With regard to Non-Commissioned Officers and Gunners, 300 promotions were issued in May 2009 with a majority of them being back-dated to October 2008. Furthermore, following an extensive review of the Promotion Assessment Report that involved high-level meetings with the Office of the Prime Minister and the input of high ranking officers within the Force, a new promotion exercise for other ranks got underway towards the end of August. The result was that innovations were effected to the promotion system where each soldier in the AFM was given a personal copy of the Soldiers' Career Handbook and the Annual Confidential Report was amalgamated to the Promotion Assessment Report. These changes gave the promotion system within the Force a more transparent approach to its workings.

Additionally, following a semester of lectures for AFM Captains in the subjects of Military History and International Affairs as part of their promotion examination to the rank of Major, examinations were held in June and all 21 AFM Officers sitting were successful in both subjects.

Conditions of Service and Service Regulations

The AFM continued working on the Appointments and Conditions of Service Regulations and is planning to continue the work with high priority in the coming year. Amendments to the Staff Association Regulations in the meantime were published in January. The first elections under the new amendments were conducted in January as well.

Decorations

During 2009, fifty members of the AFM were awarded the Long & Efficient Service Medal or Clasp on 1 October.

Sports

The AFM's membership of the *Conseil International du Sport Militaire* (CISM) was underlined with the CISM Day Run held on 25 February and a quadrangular tournament under the CISM banner held over three days (2-4 June), where the participating teams were Greece, Cyprus, the Malta Police Force and the AFM. This tournament was a huge success both with regard to organisation and visibility for Malta and also due to the excellent performances of the AFM team who were a close second to a strong Greek side.

As in previous years, a sports programme was implemented in order to increase participation in sports activities and to create healthy competition between AFM units. Participants from all Units took part in several sports and disciplines, endeavouring to obtain as much points as possible towards their respective Unit's tally.

CEREMONIAL AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

The AFM is also tasked with providing for all state ceremonial duties that are required. Of particular notice was the Guard of Honour that was mounted on 4 April to mark the new President's oath of office. In addition to this, during the period under review the AFM provided a total of 14 Guards of Honour to mark national days and visits from foreign Heads of State. In addition, 15 Quarter Guards were mounted at the Presidential Palace in connection with the Presentation of Credentials of various ambassadors.

The AFM Band was also engaged in other extra activities apart from state ceremonial. Worth mentioning is the Band's participation in Libya to commemorate the 40th Anniversary of the Libyan Revolution in August and a concert at the Mdina Metropolitan Cathedral in October during which donations were collected in aid of the Community Chest Fund.

The AFM organised its Open Day at the Valletta Waterfront on Sunday 4 October. The Open Day proved a success and this may be partly attributed to the fact that the general public had the opportunity to board vessels from the AFM's Maritime Squadron. Moreover, demonstrations from various AFM Units livened up proceeding and entertained all present.

Substantial effort was put into enhancing the AFM's public image and in further encouraging recruitment. This was done through articles in local newspapers and magazines, reports and interviews on television and radio stations and through school visits and career orientation talks with students in various educational institutions. There were also occasions where school children visited the AFM's various units thereby positively gaining first hand experience to what the work of a soldier entails.

CONCLUSION

2009 was another eventful year that underlined the commitment at all levels of the force to achieve the desired goals. The continued participation in overseas crisis management operations and the procurement of new equipment were most definitely highlights.

BRIGADIER MARTIN G XUEREB
Commander, Armed Forces of Malta

Staff Development Organisation, CPRT

INTRODUCTION

During the year 2009, 353 courses were organised for 5,132 participants. With a schedule of varied training initiatives ranging from basic skills to senior management programmes to seminars and courses for foreign delegates, 2009 saw the department's strategy being adapted to suit an ever-changing environment not least through new training methodologies, more rigorous evaluation, and the setting up of the new Centre for Policy Research and Training.

SDO STRATEGY

In fulfilling its mission, SDO's strategy for 2009 was based on a number of initiatives which included the testing of new areas of training, a shift in perspective from 'stand alone' courses to continuous development, more in-depth evaluation based on assessments and managers' feedback, and working with the head office of the Centre for Policy Research and Training in the setting up of a larger and better equipped training premises to improve our services.

SDO Restructuring

Following restructuring of the training sections in 2008, this was the first year these sections were really tried and tested. New sections include a Policy and Government Training section and widening the remit of the Finance Training section to cover all training pertinent to Corporate Services. The exercise proved a success with a record number of participants attending our training in the year under review.

ESF Proposal

With a view to taking training to another level, SDO submitted three applications under ESF PA IV:

- Maximising Leadership Potential and Ongoing Public Health Sector Reform
- Strengthening IMUs and other related functions through Specialist Training Programmes
- Developing Core Skills in the Public Service

In all, the proposals amount to 7 million euro.

Two proposals were accepted – *Developing Core Skills in the Public Service* and *Strengthening IMUs and other related functions through Specialist Training Programmes*. The first project involves a Training Needs Analysis and subsequent training focusing on different areas and covering a large section of Public Administration. The second project focuses mostly on enhancing the skills of Information Management Units through accredited and specialised training. Work was done on both projects and tenders for the first phases of the projects will be launched in the first quarter of 2010.

Accreditation

SDO resumed its work on the accreditation of its courses with the Malta Qualifications Council. Assistant Director SDO attended the launch of a Referencing Manual for the pegging of qualifications based on a qualification framework. A protocol based on the framework outlined in the Manual started to be drafted.

This will be used as the basis for an agreement between SDO and MQC for the recognition of courses delivered by SDO.

Continuous Development

Following from the accreditation initiative and in a bid to work towards a better structured continuous development programme for public officers, SDO decided to draft a certificate entitled Certificate in Public Management, which is aimed at middle managers and contains a number of courses found in the Prospectus but built into an accredited programme thus giving the possibility to public officers to accumulate credits and work towards an accredited certificate rather than attend one-off training courses. Thus, once they enrol they can work through a whole comprehensive programme which will help them in their positions as middle managers and also groom them for future higher responsibilities and career advancements.

Certificate in Public Management

Prior to the launching of the certificate, which is made up of six modules, the first module was offered in 2009 to see whether there would be some take-up. The module carried an assignment as a form of assessment, the mark of which was to be recorded in SDO's database for future use should participants decide that they would like to attend the remaining modules and thus complete the Certificate.

The assessment in the first module was optional in that it was left up to the participants to decide whether they wanted to do the assignment or not. Those who opted out would then be given a certificate of attendance. However, the response was very positive and beyond expectations and, on this basis, it was decided to forge ahead with the certificate programme. To date, 159 participants have attended module 1.

Assessments

In order for courses to be accredited, standards need to be adhered to including those related to the duration of the training and the level of qualification of the tutors and the assessment of learning. Assessment also forms part of SDO's vision as an important part of evaluation, which is being steadily improved every year. In fact 2008 had ushered the first assessed courses within the ICT section and assessment was included as part of the requisites in the 2009 training tender. Courses such as *A Foundation Course in Economics for Public Officers* even have short 'homework' between each session (held once a week) which carries 25% of the whole mark with another 75% carried by the final assignment.

Evaluation

Apart from evaluating learning by means of assignments, projects, case studies, presentations and other means appropriate to the subject matter, SDO also evaluated its training at the level of transfer of learning to the job. By means of questionnaires to course participants and their line managers, the effectiveness of training on the job was assessed. A population sample representative of all the participants of SDO courses was compiled together with the line managers' details.

SDO's Involvement in the Setting up of a New Centre for Policy Research and Training

SDO coordinated with CPRT head office in the restructuring and refurbishing of new premises which should see SDO relocate to it during the first quarter of 2010

New Initiatives

Blended Learning

A new initiative that started at the end of 2009 is blended learning. Although this idea had been explored for some time, it had not yet really taken off as part of the short programmes delivered by SDO.

Arrangements were made with Government Intranet Managers to provide a space for SDO to upload documents which will be used in certain training programmes as online support and training. Although this initiative is still in its infancy, it could prove interesting and cost-effective.

New Website and Logo

SDO is liaising with the IMU in order to create a new website. In the meantime, a temporary website was developed which reflects the new image and CPRT logo, in order to provide all the necessary information related to the department online until the new website is launched.

Careers Convention

During 2009, the careers convention was held at University and SDO helped in its organisation by creating a presentation featuring some public officers, identified by the Management Development section, who had undergone training at SDO and who could therefore attest to the value of training and the opportunities provided by a career in the Public Service.

Core Training

Apart from the above initiatives, training has also been improved with attention being given to two important aspects:

- Further customisation of training based on the work schedule of the participant;
- More focused training, particularly in the development of managers in various skills such as economics, financial management, project management, leadership etc. Training is also more in-depth and intensive with longer courses and assessments.

Each section focused on areas which feature most on the public service agenda such as Better Regulation, Freedom of Information, various aspects of management including ICT management etc

Policy and Government

Given the number of public officers who are managing EU projects, training in areas such as Structural Funds Database and Induction Training for New Beneficiaries was held. The former courses were organised by the PPCD with the support of SDO and intended to equip officers with the skill to train respective colleagues within their unit.

Other courses organised by Policy and Government include Speech Writing & Speech Making, Public Relations, Making Effective Policy, Evaluation of Public Policies, Induction training for New Recruits, Europe on the Internet, Legislation and others.

Course Name	No of Courses	No of Participants
Legislative Drafting	1	41
PPCD – Introduction Training Programme	1	31
Making Effective policy	3	41
Evaluation of Public Policies	2	29
Effective Briefing and Corresponding	2	31
Europe on the Internet	3	26
EU Funding and its Opportunities	2	15

Public Relations	5	62
Replying to PQs	1	33
Better Regulation Across Government	2	32
Speech Writing and Speech Making	4	67
PPCD – Structural Funds Database	18	165
Freedom of Information Act	8	136
PPCD - Capacity Building for Cohesion Policy	1	17
PPCD - Management Verifications	1	38
Total	54	772

Continuous Development

During 2009 this section received various requests to co-ordinate tailor-made training programmes for sections/units within the ministries besides the other training as listed in the SDO Prospectus.

Training included Data Protection Awareness programmes. These requests were often made after data protection audits were implemented in these particular sections. Numerous requested courses were regarding registry procedures. One request came from a ministry following the amalgamation of the registries of two departments within it. A registry procedure programme was structured specifically for staff of these departments with hands-on sessions on their registry electronic system included in the training for all the departmental staff. A further request was also received for sessions in which the basic principles of registry work were to be introduced. This was requested in view of plans to establish a file depository and mini registry function within the unit.

Customer Relations courses were coordinated with some of these being tailor-made for staff working in various offices such as local councils, primary health clinics and front office personnel. Each had particular requisites and according to their clientele and establishment, different programmes were scheduled. Visits to other customer relating environments were included in the training so as to discuss views and enhance the vision of this profession.

Course Name	No of Courses	No of Participants
Data Protection	14	206
Performance Management Programme (PMP)	3	51
Developing Assertiveness & Self-Confidence	7	103
Pre-Retirement Course	2	37
Skills towards Work-Life Balance	2	34
Registry Services	8	114
Registry Services/DOCREG Coaching	5	60
Docreg Coaching	1	1
Anger Management	3	48
The Art of Writing Effectively	6	94
Effective Time Management	6	90
Front Office Skills	9	146
Success Skills for Secretaries	2	33
Communication & Conflict Management Skills	3	51
Total	71	1,067

Corporate Services Training

In 2009, the newly structured Corporate Services Training section replaced the Financial and Departmental Training one. The focus of this section is mainly on training related to accounting, economics, statistical tools, and related fields. Courses organised are mostly targeted at public officers carrying out their duties in Finance and Administration departments as well as in Human Resources Management and Development departments and sections within the various ministries.

Course Name	No of Courses	No of Participants
Statistics for Public Officers	6	112
The New ICT Customer Care System	6	82
Financial Management and Control	4	67
Departmental Accounting System (DAS)	6	67
Public Service Recruitment Portal	5	57
Disciplinary Procedures at the Place of Work	4	175
Procurement by Contracting Authorities	1	15
National Procurement	1	21
Foundation Course in Economics for Public	1	17
The Art of Writing Effectively	1	19
Total	35	632

ICT Training

ICT has been focusing on equipping public officers with ECDL level skills in ICT. 2009 even saw a direct involvement by SDO to analyse whether participants are not only attending ECDL courses but going the extra mile and taking the exams. Participants were asked to indicate if they intend to sit an ECDL module exam after attending a training course at SDO. After some time, participants were also contacted to check the outcome of the exam. A database is being built to record this data.

The idea of workshops also took more hold this year with workshops in MS Word and MS Excel being introduced focusing on particular topics. These 3-hour workshops were found very useful by participants since those who had a problem in a particular area could tackle it during these workshops.

Course Name	No of Courses	No of Participants
Basic ICT Skills	12	103
Concepts of IT	4	71
Database	15	129
Desktop Publishing	2	22
Excel Charts Workshop	2	13
Excel Formulas Workshop	4	35
Information and Communication	7	68
MS Access Advanced	4	43
MS Excel Advanced	16	133
MS Excel Workshop3: Pivot Tables	1	12
MS Outlook 2003 (Email)	5	49
MS PowerPoint Advanced	6	50
MS Word Advanced	9	81
Presentation	7	74
Spreadsheets	12	131
Touch Typing	3	25
Using the Computer and Managing Files	12	119
Word Mail Merge Workshop	3	27
Word Processing	10	111
Word Tables Workshop	1	10
Total	135	1,306

Management Development Training

During 2009 the Management Development Training Section introduced workshop style training sessions for senior managers. During these workshops senior managers have the opportunity to discuss pertinent issues during a half day session. Participation by senior managers at these workshops was very high and a number of workshops on Listening Skills, Project Management, Designing Presentations, ICT Management, Active Listening and Lateral Thinking were held during 2009.

Another new initiative this year was the Annual Seminar for Senior Managers, the first of which was held on 7 May 2009 and for which 286 senior managers attended. This initiative was primarily driven by the

need to make all senior managers aware of new legislation and related issues. The seminar was addressed by the Principal Permanent Secretary among other speakers and the topics covered included the Public Administration Act, the Freedom of Information Act, Better Regulation and Overseas Development Assistance.

A number of courses on Managing with Leadership were also organised throughout 2009. This course is structured in the form of a study unit and is one of the modules of a certificate programme which has been submitted for recognition by the Malta Qualifications Council for subsequent accreditation. Participants who opt to submit an assignment and are successful in this, gain credit for this module.

A number of follow-up sessions were also held as a continuation of a number of courses. These sessions are being held to sustain learning, review any assignments submitted as well as to go over action plans and their implementation.

Other sessions held for senior managers included ministry-requested Teamwork training and training on the newly introduced Freedom of Information Act.

In an effort to promote a culture of coaching and mentoring among managerial grades, a number of courses were also held in this area addressed primarily at senior and middle managers. The main objective behind these sessions is for managers to help their staff maximise their potential whilst achieving the organisational goals in a more economic way.

During the fourth quarter of 2009, two Managing with Leadership – Local Councils session were held, one for the Mayors and Deputy Mayors and the other for the Executive Secretaries for which 47 participants attended in all.

Also, during the second quarter of 2009, SDO was asked to provide coaching or training to persons who had applied for a Headship Position and were not selected for the position. This exercise is aimed to help applicants identify skills deficiencies and address them with appropriate training and consultation.

Course Name	No of Courses	No of Participants
The Team Challenge	4	55
Developing Personal Influence and Impact	2	32
Interpersonal Effectiveness	3	45
Neurolinguistic Programming (NLP) for Managers	2	40
Leadership Course for Principals – Follow-up	2	38
Bringing about a Cultural Change	2	30
Managing with Leadership	5	86
Making Innovation Happen	2	27
Coaching and Mentoring - Facilitating Mutually Beneficial Partnerships	3	40
Managing Meetings	3	33
Interpersonal Effectiveness – Gozo	1	16
Supervisory Skills – Gozo	1	13
Managing with Leadership - Local Councils	2	47
Workshops		
Listening Skills Workshop	4	66
ICT Management for Senior Managers Workshop	3	44
Active Listening Workshop	1	16
Project Management Workshop	5	78
Basic Design for Presentations Workshop	3	42
Lateral Thinking Workshop	4	63
Seminars		
Annual Seminar for Senior Management	1	286
Communication Coordinators Seminar	1	18
Team Building Sessions		
Team Building for Senior Management - MITC	1	20
Team Building for Senior Management - Plant Health Department	1	40
Total	56	1,175

Languages

SDO offered sponsorships to public officers interested in following language training in French, German and Spanish. These courses are offered in collaboration with the Alliance Française, German Maltese Circle and Circulo Cultural Hispano Maltese.

Language	No of officers sponsored in 2009
French	4
German	5
Spanish	16
Total	25

2009 also saw a number of training sessions on the new rules introduced in the Maltese grammar and writing. These were organised by SDO for staff at the Government Property Division and the Consumer and Competition Division following a request by these departments, as well as for other officers.

Maltese	No of Training Sessions	No of Participants
SDO	2	32
Government Property Division	2	33
Consumer and Competition Division	5	41
Total	9	106

EXTERNAL TRAINING

Sponsorships for Masters Degree

Following calls for application for interested and eligible public officers to be sponsored to read Masters degrees in various areas including HR, Business Management, European Affairs and Public Administration a good number of applications were received. A total of 12 applicants were chosen to read a Masters degree in various areas including Public Policy, Finance, HR and others.

Diploma in Public Administration

The Diploma in Public Administration resumed from 2008 and employees entered their second and last year of studies. More than 20 officers attend University twice weekly.

FOREIGN SCHOLARSHIPS AND FUNDING

EIPA Courses

Six officials participated during 2009:

- One OPM official attended a training course in *Transparency and Data Protection: Cooperating or Conflicting Elements of Good Governance?* held on 8-9 June.
- Two officials from the Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Investment attended a course in *Implementing the New Structural Funds Regulations 2007-2013* held on 15 - 16 June.
- Three officials from the MFEI - Treasury attended a course in *EU Funding Opportunities for Migration* held on 18-19 June.

IPA Courses

Two officials from PPCD (OPM) attended a training course in *Structural Funds Course 1* held in Ireland between 14-18 September 2009. Another two PPCD officials attended a training course in *Management and Monitoring of EU-funded Operational Programme* which was held on 29 September-1 October.

UK – Malta Bilateral Exchange Scheme

Following the selection of officials to participate in the UK – Malta Bilateral Exchange Scheme, two of the selected officers took up their placement in July 2009.

One officer from the Paying Agency, MRRA spent the first week (13–17 July) of his placement at the Rural Payment Division of the Welsh Assembly Government. He will be taking up the second week of placement later on in the year to enable him to cover a new scheme which will be launched by the Welsh Paying Agency.

Another officer from Zammit Clapp Hospital took up the placement at the King's College Hospital between 5 and 18 July.

Scholarships

SDO regularly receives invitations for training courses which are organised and sponsored by the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Singapore Ministry of Foreign Affairs. During 2009, five officials participated in a Commonwealth training programme and another five officials participated in a Singapore training programme.

EVENTS

Montenegro Study Visit

A group of nine senior government officials from Montenegro participated in a study visit organised by the Staff Development Organisation between 20 and 24 April 2009. The programme *Public Administration Reform on the Road to EU Membership* included sessions on the Maltese Public Administration, the Maltese Political System, Change Initiatives, the Economy, Managing Change and Preparing for the EU, the Management Efficiency Unit and IT as well as a number of site visits. The programme was well received by the delegates.

Information Programme in Malta for European Commission officials

The Staff Development Organisation informed the European Commission that it was willing to organise once again an Information Programme in Malta for officials from the European Commission. This programme, which was held in October 2009, was also very well received. To quote Manuela Veiga, DG Personnel and Administration (Directorate of Staff and Careers) in a formal communication she sent to SDO: 'The participants returned satisfied and outlined the warm welcome they received. They very much appreciated the programme, the professional competence of the lecturers and the organisation of the seminar which was excellent. This programme really achieved one of its objectives i.e. creating an informal network.'

JOANNA GENOVESE

Director (Staff Development Organisation)

Charter Support Unit

INTRODUCTION

During 2009, the Charter Support Unit (CSU) finalised the compliance audit exercise of all Quality Service Charters within central and local government, with the exception of Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport. Compliance Audit Reports were compiled and sent to all relative ministries for further action.

During 2009, the CSU also pursued other quality assessment exercises, mainly through a Mystery Calling exercise. Following the presentation of the outcome during the Permanent Secretary Committee of November 2009, a working group was formed by Principal Permanent Secretary, OPM to oversee further Mystery Calling exercises.

The Customer Care System (CCS) V2 was launched in May 2009. The CCS V2 was developed by Alert Communications Ltd, in collaboration with CIO OPM, MITA and CSU, according to an alliance agreement. The CSU was also responsible for delivering training on the new system to all CCS users in Malta and Gozo.

Functions and Responsibilities

Quality Service Charters

During 2009, the CSU continued with the development process of the Quality Service Charter for all the schools that fall under the remit of St Benedict College. Further meetings were held with the Heads of all 13 A, B, C schools that fall within the college remit. Following an assessment of all schools, recommendations were given and further school visits were organised to assess progress. The QSC was drafted and is awaiting approval for publication.

Quality Service Charters – Compliance Audits

As established in OPM Circular 10/2006, CSU was delegated to carry out Compliance Audits of all QSCs. During 2009 two Programme Managers (Charters) conducted all compliance audits while another two CSU members of staff carried out customer surveys and surprise visits, as part of the audit process. In 2009 the CSU completed the audit exercise for a total of 37 chartered sites, including:

- Marriage Registry
- Passports
- Treasury
- VAT
- Immovable Property Section
- Operations Directorate (Simple)
- Notary to Government
- Civil Status Section
- Cleansing Services Department
- Consumer Affairs Directorate
- Examinations Gozo
- Public Library (Gozo)
- Passports
- Sports Complex

- Gozo Health Centre
- Welfare of the Elderly (Gozo)
- Issuance of Civil Status Certificates (Gozo)
- Notary to Government (Gozo)
- Marriage Registry (Gozo)
- Outpatients Department (Gozo)
- Roads Section
- Admittance & Emergency (Gozo)
- Drug Control Unit
- Health Statistics
- Health Inspectorate
- Iodine 131 Therapy
- Dermatology Department
- Floriana Health Centre
- Schedule V
- Treatment Abroad
- Qormi Health Centre
- Speech Language Department
- Welfare of the Elderly
- Health Promotion Department
- Employment & Industrial Relations
- NCPE
- Social Security

The final consolidated reports were forwarded to the respective Permanent Secretaries for follow-up action.

Mystery calling exercise

In the course of 2009, a number of complaints were received by the Government Information Service (GIS) Freephone 153, relating to difficulties encountered by the general public in getting through to a number of government entities/departments via telephone calls.

As a result, Permanent Secretary, OPM (Information, Tourism & Sustainable Development) directed the CSU to embark on an exercise wherein a number of government customer care/freephone lines were tested under mystery calling conditions. The calls were directed to customer care lines indicated by the GIS as being the most requested by the general public.

The Mystery Calling exercise was conducted between 1 and 30 September 2009. During this period, mystery calls were made by four members of CSU staff on a total of 16 customer care lines, with the primary aim being to gauge the level of efficiency with which calls are answered. Moreover, the exercise assessed the disposition adopted by the officers manning these customer care lines, and shed light on whether relative service standards (OPM 7/2006, Annex 2) were being observed.

A relative report was presented during the Permanent Secretary Committee of November 2009.

Common Assessment Framework implementation

As directed by Principal Permanent Secretary, the CSU and the Management Efficiency Unit (MEU) formed a working group to study and implement the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) tool. The working group agreed on an implementation plan according to which the CAF would first be introduced in five pilot sites. The latter were chosen according to their performance and meetings were scheduled with management to assess commitment. The working group also started discussions with the European Institute of Public Administration to organise CAF-related training.

Customer Care System

During 2009, CSU was involved in the redevelopment of the CCS on a web-enabled platform. The CCS V2 was launched in May 2009. The new CCS was designed to build on the success of the CCS V1 to further facilitate communication between central government, local government and customers. The CSU, in collaboration with SDO was also responsible for the training of 250 CCS users. Furthermore, onsite hands-on training is being delivered according to demand. The CSU was also responsible for providing assistance to all the users during the migration process.

CSU is also currently in discussions to divest the CCS to a number of additional sites.

During 2009, the following CCS requests were submitted and investigated. Requests are being produced according to theme:

Theme	Count
Agriculture & Fisheries	63
Competitiveness & Communication	160
Consumer Affairs	7
Culture, Youth & Sports	35
Education	6
Elderly & Special Needs	1
Environment	2,576
Family and Social Solidarity	7
Finance	24
Government Information	206
Health, Elderly & Comm Care	542
Housing & Property	225
Investment, Industry and IT	6
Law & Order	428
Power and Energy	2,679
Requests for Gozo	154
Rescue and Security	1
Resources and Infrastructure	5
Status and Registration	3
Tourism	7
Trade and Industry	7
Transport	2367
Water & Sewerage	1350
Grand Total	10,589

STANLEY BORG

Assistant Director (Charter Support Unit)

Management Efficiency Unit

BACKGROUND

The Management Efficiency Unit endeavours to be the Public Service's entity of first choice for the sourcing of management consultancy services. We seek to be recognised as a value-based, high-impact Unit that excels in implementing major change projects within the context of wider public sector reform.

The Management Efficiency Unit was set up in 1997 and is constituted as a separate organisational entity within the Office of the Prime Minister. Its mission is to facilitate the improvement of government services. To deliver this operational thrust the Management Efficiency Unit has, through its multi-disciplined base of professionals, *inter alia* offered and provided the following services:

- Formulation and Implementation of cross-Government Programmes to deliver specific priority initiatives;
- Policy Development;
- Strategic Planning and Reviews;
- Mandate Reviews, Organisational Consolidation and Restructuring;
- Re-engineering of Business Processes; and
- Consultation and Communications Strategies.

ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2009

Key achievements in 2009 include coordinating the delivery of national strategic projects reflecting government commitments jointly with ministries, departments and government entities. These include better regulation, regulatory reforms, local government reform, public administration modernisation, and ministry-specific initiatives.

Better Regulation

- *Better Regulation Strategy*: During its latest visit on the National Reform Programme, the EU Commission delegation commented positively on Malta's better regulation strategy seeing it as relevant and sufficiently comprehensive. This strategy is driven by the Parliamentary Secretary for Public Information and Dialogue. Moreover, this BR Strategy has been shared with Permanent Secretaries, Heads of Department and Chief Executive Officers.
- *Sectoral consultation*: In order to better focus on the business pain points, a sectoral consultation exercise was carried out under the aegis of the Parliamentary Secretary for Public Dialogue and Information. Meetings were held with 12 distinct business sectors, including the Gozo business community, and a horizontal issues workshop was also held with constituted bodies representing businesses. Moreover, a brochure inviting suggestions was sent to all businesses. Priorities are being decided on the light of the consultation findings.
- *Closure of the Action Plan for Simplification*: In the initial years, Government's better regulation approach was focused primarily on, but not limited to, the implementation and monitoring of An Action Plan for Simplification (APS). A substantial part of the plan was dedicated to citizens. Fifty measures were completed which were anticipated to have an effect on the whole of society, albeit on different levels, as they deal with various aspects of everyday life such as the provision of health, education, business and social security services. Business measures were also completed. It is recognised that since the APS was drawn up, as with every plan, certain circumstances and occurrences may have happened which might call

for a revisiting of such plan and make certain identified measures no longer valid. Therefore, the APS will be closed off to make way for the Better Regulation Strategy.

- *Certificates*: Analysing the anticipated impact if requests from government departments and government entities for birth, marriage and death certificates from businesses and citizens were to be removed.
- *Better policy making*: A review of the Legal Notice Checklist process was carried out by MEU with the aim to recommend improvements to the policy making process.
- *Systems and Training*: The Unit consolidated its BR Procedures Manual, including many local good practices from different sectors. The manual has now entered into a continuous improvement cycle, and will be updated regularly on an annual basis. Training on BR has continued to be deployed. Good practice sharing is continuing within the network of BR contact points in line Ministries. Furthermore, two Maltese better practice case studies in the field of simplification have been referred to and accepted by the Swedish Presidency.

Regulatory Reform

- *MEPA reform*: The MEU was heavily involved in the MEPA reform including the situational analysis studies, the preparation of material as an input into the public consultation document, detailed sub-tasks and analysis of issues, planning and implementing the process of reform, consultation meetings and analysis, and follow-up work.
- *Trade Licensing Review*: Further to the better regulation efforts underway, the MEU was also entrusted at looking at the trade licensing regime to promote further simplification and allow businesses more room to grow and to make it easier for them to set up shop. Various interdependent issues have been and are being analysed.

Local Government Reform

- *Supporting Local Council Reform*: Following the detailed review on Local Council Funding last year, the Unit continued refining the Local Councils Funding Formula in the light of developments within the wider Local Councils Reform. A simplified funding framework has been put forward for consideration with detailed impact analysis on local councils. In addition, following the strategic review of the Department of Local Government, work proceeded on implementation planning and supporting change management.
- *Local Enforcement System*: MEU carried out a detailed analysis of the current situation, facilitated consultation, analysed consultation feedback and proposed recommendations to improve the Local Enforcement System.

Public Administration Modernisation

- *Public Administration Act*: The Unit was involved in the preparations to bring into force the Public Administration Act working *inter alia* on (a) establishment of agencies evaluation criteria, (b) agency performance agreements, (c) MEU's own agency performance agreement, (d) PSC regulations, (e) change management, and (f) implementation planning.
- *Strategic and operations review of the Public Service Commission*: The PSC was reviewed in detail so as to identify issues and opportunities for renewal and realignment with the Public Administration Act.
- *Enterprise Information Management System*: Working jointly with MITA on one of the largest and important ICT solution tenders, MEU was principally involved in identifying and analysing priorities on this major project. The initial emphasis of the project will be on document and records management.
- *Putting forward proposals on better archiving compliance*: Jointly with the National Archivist, the MEU has been analysing how the public administration can fully comply with the National Archives Act, looking at the competency requirements for Records Officers, and planning implementation action.
- *Review of performance management systems*: MEU proposed a new orientation of the top management performance management system, oriented towards effective delivery of government commitments. The system includes cascade of objectives down the management chain of command. Moreover, recommendations on peer and 360 degree reviews of performance were put forward, including independent third-party assessments of key performance indicators.

- *Planning for Common Assessment Framework pilots within the public administration:* In its pursuit to continuously modernise the Maltese public administration, the MEU, jointly with the Charter Support Unit, identified pilot sites for the implementation of the Common Assessment Framework management system so as to improve delivery of public services.
- *Supporting the SAAC pre-selection process of Directors General and Directors within the public administration.*

Ministry-specific Interventions

- *Review of OPM transportation requirements:* OPM transportation requirements were analysed to make best use of the fleet whilst introducing more environmental-friendly means of transportation with less carbon emissions. The proposal is now moving into implementation stage.
- *Organisational restructuring planning for the Ministry for Gozo:* In the light of the strategic developments within the Ministry for Gozo, MEU continued supporting the Ministry in designing an optimal organisational structure to deliver the EcoGozo Strategy and programme of works of the Ministry.
- *Strategic review of the Government Property Division:* A detailed thorough review of the strategic issues facing this important asset management division was carried out. This review will provide the basis for ongoing restructuring and implementation of policies which make best use of government assets, keeping in view social, economic and asset utilisation considerations.

MEU also hosted a meeting of the EU Public Administration Network Learning Team on the Reduction of Administrative Burden on Citizens in late November 2009. This was attended by some 30 participants from Member States. The Unit also hosted an internship from the Polish School of Government in Better Regulation for eight weeks.

Current Work in Progress

Apart from carrying out follow-up work (where necessary) on the above projects, MEU is presently working on *inter alia*:

- Developing consultation guidelines for the Maltese public administration, notwithstanding the fact that consultation is widely practised.
- Developing the Better Regulation Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to measure overall BR performance within the public administration.
- In 2009, the MEU applied for European Social Fund with the aim of developing the Maltese Public Sector's capacity to implement better regulation through dedicated support to line ministries and the provision of training. This €1.6 million project proposal was selected by the Project Selection Committee. Work is in progress on mobilising this project.

These achievements show that the leadership and the internal restructuring at MEU have contributed to increase the pace of change in the public sector, are delivering results and providing better value for money to Government.

PROPOSED PROGRAMMES AND ACTIVITIES FOR 2010

The agenda for the MEU is determined by the strategic objectives set by Government for the delivery of its services and is primarily focused towards providing advice to the Prime Minister, Ministers and the Principal Permanent Secretary in the conceptualisation and implementation of a continuous change management programme within the Public Service and Public Sector. MEU's outlook for 2010 includes the delivery of high-impact, across-Government projects in accordance with the Prime Minister's priorities such as:

- Transitioning into an agency under the Public Administration Act, once the relevant Agency articles of the Act are brought into force
- Continuing the implementation of Government's Better Regulation Strategy including:

- Reducing as much as possible the need for businesses and citizens to provide birth, death and marriage certificates, by placing the onus of validating this information on the department or government entity. This means making better use of ICT and the government databases.
- Transitioning towards administrative data sources as much as possible, thereby reducing surveys and information requests on businesses from the National Statistics Office, departments and regulatory entities. This is one of the key measures promoted in the Budget 2010, particularly on SMEs.
- Continued simplification initiatives (repealing, recasting of regulation) and re-engineering of internal processes within line ministries, departments and government entities.
- Implementing and rolling out consultation guidelines for the Maltese public administration once approved by OPM and Cabinet.
- Implementing the recommended changes to Legal Notice Checklist instrument, once approved by OPM, so as to improve the policy making process. Reference is made to the SME test and the 'think small first' principle as a tool to measure the impact and the need to be sensitive to special circumstances of SMEs (and micro industry) was highlighted in the review.
- Initiating the implementation of the ESF-funded project, primarily through the conclusion of project procurement and commencing delivery. As a result of this project, the public administration will acquire competencies that will help to forge an even better and modern regulatory framework which is aligned with Malta's socio-economic development needs. The management framework of Government will also benefit from increased effectiveness, efficiency, resource utilisation, quality, higher standards, and modern tools/techniques. The final outcome will be the continued reduction of information obligations, unnecessary bureaucracy and administrative burden on businesses and citizens.
- Synergising with other major reforms within the wider Public Sector such as the Public Administration Act, eGovernment, the Budget, 2010 Measures promoting economic growth and employment, Quality Service Charters, and contributing to the development of the added capability in Policy Development within the wider Public Sector.

JOHN W AQUILINA
Chief Executive Officer, MEU

Defence Matters Directorate

The Defence Matters Directorate was set up in May 2003 to upgrade, consolidate and formalise the defence function of the OPM, a function which has been in existence almost continuously since 1964. The main responsibilities of the Directorate are to:

- provide objective technical and policy advice as well as timely analysis on all aspects of military matters affecting the Government's defence policy;
- monitor and analyse the implementation of Cabinet decision and government policies on defence matters and to report on the extent to which policy and performing targets are met;
- develop new policy initiatives and concepts on all AFM matters with a view to improving the operational, logistic and administrative effectiveness of the AFM;
- in coordination with other stakeholders within OPM, and in liaison with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, conduct defence diplomacy, to manage bilateral as well as multilateral defence relations with other countries and international organisations.

AFM Policy and Administrative Issues

AFM Recruitment

Calls for applications for the recruitment off Officer Cadets, Gunners and EVRFs were processed by the Directorate and Prime Minister's approval obtained.

Furthermore, during the course of 2009, the recruitment process of Officer Cadets and Gunners was concluded. Two passing-out parades, were held at Luqa barracks in 2009 with 94 recruits confirmed in the rank of gunner and eight in the rank of officer cadets. The Prime Minister was the guest of honour in the December parade during which he conveyed a message of appreciation to the AFM and congratulated the newly appointed Gunners and Lieutenants on their successful completion of their course. This Office was involved in drafting the Prime Ministers' speech.

AFM Training Evaluation Team

Following the death of Gunner Matthew Psaila, during a training exercise at Chadwick lakes in February 2009, an Independent Inquiry Board was appointed by the Prime Minister to look into the AFM C (Special Duties) Company and the circumstances which led to that fatal accident. Following the Board's report, on 2 July 2009, the Prime Minister appointed a Committee within the Defence Matters Directorate to advise the Prime Minister on how the recommendations of the Board of Inquiry may be implemented and to provide a time frame for its implementation. The Committee, which was chaired by Director (Defence Matters) submitted its recommendations to the Prime Minister on 31 July 2009. The Prime Minister, after accepting the recommendations, tasked the Director to liaise with the Commander AFM to ensure the effective and timely implementation of the recommendations.

AFM Promotions Evaluation Team

During the first semester of 2009, an AFM Promotions Evaluation Team appointed by the Prime Minister and chaired by Director (Defence Matters) looked into the AFM promotions system. Amongst others they were tasked to review the Promotion Assessment Report (PAR), review the Confidential Report system,

assess the stream of career progression from the lower ranks of the AFM, and recommend ways in which such progression may be positively managed, consider the setting up of a promotions committee.

The Team was also asked to give due consideration to the Ombudsman's report on the AFM's 2006 promotions, the shortcomings identified by OPM vis-à-vis AFM promotions in general, and the role of the Administration Branch, HQ AFM to guide individual soldiers about their potential for promotion. Several recommendations were made by the Board in their final report submitted to the Prime Minister on 15 July. One of the most important outcomes of this exercise is the publication of the AFM Soldier's Career Handbook. The aim of this handbook is to provide all the necessary information to all soldiers, non-commissioned officers and warrant officer ranks to familiarise themselves with the career development process within the AFM.

UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Malta signed the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and is currently pursuing the internal process leading to its ratification. Following consultations with AFM and other relevant stakeholders on how ratification of the Convention may affect recruitment into the AFM, the Directorate proposed that Malta ratifies the Convention without any reservations whilst making a declaration stating that in the spirit of equality it is understood that persons with disability wishing to enter into the armed forces should be subject to the same standards of medical fitness as all other recruits.

Other Personnel Issues

- It was agreed with the Office of the President that a second ADC would be appointed as of 1 July 2009.
- The Director formed part of an AFM Board in which AFM candidates interested in representing Malta in Brussels by taking up the Malta quota post at the EU Military Staff in 2011 were interviewed.
- The Director formed part of an AFM Board in which AFM candidates interested in participating in the Advanced Command and Staff Course to be held at the Defence Academy, UK were interviewed.
- The Director formed part of an AFM Board which interviewed candidates for entry into the AFM as Officer Cadets.
- The Directorate liaised with the AFM, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Police, the Civil Protection Department and the Permanent Representation in Brussels to make a proposal on updating the allowances given to Maltese personnel who participate in ESDP civilian and/or military missions.
- The Directorate, AFM and MFEI began meeting to find a way to tackle the issue of anomalies which arose in a few AFM salaries when the "New Salaries and Conditions of Service for the AFM" was implemented on 1 January 2008.

AFM Travel

The Directorate continued to monitor and approve as necessary all requests for AFM travel overseas.

AFM Tenders

The Directorate continued to monitor and approve as necessary all requests for the issue and/or awarding of AFM tenders. It also conducted an assessment on internal processing thereof and made recommendations accordingly, including on the possible use of the EDA's Electronic Bulletin Board.

Parliamentary Questions

During the period under review this Office, in liaison with HQ AFM, continued processing parliamentary questions pertaining to AFM matters and subsequently forwarding draft replies to Permanent Secretary OPM for necessary approval.

Purchase of Helicopters

The Directorate continued to liaise with the AFM, and the US Embassy regarding the procurement of two helicopters for the AFM co-financed by Malta and the US.

Board of Survey to dispose of AFM assets

Following a request from the AFM, the Directorate made the necessary arrangements with OPM DCS for the appointment of two boards of survey for the disposal of unserviceable items on the AFM's inventory, including patrol boat P33. Staff from this Directorate was nominated as a members on these boards to facilitate their proceedings. Following onsite inspections the boards submitted their recommendations on the disposal of such unserviceable items which were eventually approved.

Malta Air Show 2009

The Directorate assisted the organisers of the annual Malta Air Show to contact participants from the 5+5 area to participate in the 2010 Air Show.

AFM Band

The Director took the initiative to organise a meeting between the AFM and the organist of the Mdina Cathedral with the view of organising a joint concert in the Cathedral as one of the events marking AFM Day. It was agreed that the concert will take place on Friday 2 October 2009 and that all proceeds of the event would be donated to the Community Chest Fund.

Visits to AFM Units by Director Defence Matters

During the year under review, the Director Defence continued her regular visits to the various regiments and units of the AFM at Lyster Barracks Hal Far. This series of visits is primarily aimed to familiarise the Assistant Director Defence and Senior Principal Officer with the various roles and capabilities of the AFM. Moreover, such visits enable Director Defence to obtain first-hand information from the persons on the ground and be in a better position to facilitate the implementation of new measures.

EU Common Security and Defence Policy

Ongoing monitoring of development in the CSDP and ensuring that Malta's rights are safeguarded

The Directorate continuously monitored developments in the EU Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) formerly ESDP. A number of exchanges were held with other governmental stakeholders, in particular Malta's Permanent Representation in Brussels, in relation to the position to be adopted by Malta on various formal EU documents. Major exchanges concerned:

- the EU Integrated Maritime Policy, particularly initiatives bearing on maritime surveillance;
- the Lisbon Treaty and its impact on security and defence;
- issues relevant to European Common Defence and the impact on Maltese neutrality;
- the EU Capability Development Plan;
- EDA Work Programme and Budget for 2010 – minimise costs for Malta whilst ensuring access to capability development efforts of interest to Malta; including a letter from the PM to SG/HR;
- EU relations with third parties;
- the ATHENA (mechanism of the financing of common costs of EU military operations) review – defined Malta's national position and ensured common costs would be kept as low as possible.

The Directorate ensured that Malta's interests as an EU Member State were properly safeguarded, particularly by ensuring appropriate wording in texts defining the relationship between the EU and NATO in ESDP matters.

EU Operations

Malta continued its participation with two members of personnel from the AFM in the EU Monitoring Mission in Georgia (EUMM Georgia) and one officer in the UK Headquarters of the EU mission combating piracy off the coast of Somalia (EUNAVFOR ATALANTA).

In connection with these missions, this Directorate monitored closely the situation in both countries through the various periodical reports from both missions and a continuous monitoring of international news as well as the proceedings within the different Council bodies.

In connection with EU efforts in Somalia, the directorate closely followed and actively contributed to the discussion on the EU mission to train Somali Security Forces in Uganda in view of possible participation. Also, it is understood that increased security and stability in Somalia would reduce a push factor for irregular immigration as well as minimise risks from piracy on vessels carrying the Maltese flag.

Participation in EU Defence Fora

Director Defence Matters accompanied ministerial delegations and/or herself, or her representative, represented Malta at the various meetings with a bearing on defence and security. Items discussed in such meetings included the current operations and missions, the development of capability, the European Security Strategy, Defence related aspects of the Lisbon Treaty, military operations, and EU's cooperation with partners such as NATO, AU and UN and the integrated maritime policy amongst other things. Such meetings included:

- 2 GAERC meetings in Ministers of Defence Format
- 2 Informal EU Defence Ministers' Meetings
- 4 EU Defence Policy Directors Meetings
- 2 EU Security Directors Meetings
- 8 EDA Steering Boards (SB) and 10 Preparatory Committee Meetings in advance of the SBs

In preparation for such meetings, the Directorate compiled appropriate briefs and speaking notes.

Contributions to EU Agencies and CSDP Related Expenses

In 2009 Malta paid its share of common costs of EU institutions as follows:

- EU Satellite Centre Operational Budget €4,896.18 + SATCEN Pensions Budget - €326.01
- EDA Budget - €11,787
- Common costs for ESDP Operations (Athena) - €13,622

Hosting of an EDA R&T Workshop

In October 2009, Malta hosted a workshop on Defence Research and Technology (R&T) organised by the European Defence Agency for government officials and industries across the new EU Member States to enhance their ability to participate in defence R&T by:

- providing information to newcomers or less experienced participating Member States (pMS) on the EDA, its R&T efforts to enable Member States and their research providers (industries, SMEs, research laboratories, etc) to participate successfully in EDA R&T activities programmes and projects;
- exchanging practical knowledge and skills between experienced and less experienced pMS and industries;
- proposing a working framework for more comprehensive involvement of newcomers and less experienced pMS in EDA R&T activities at European Level;
- elaborating on specific tools to promote the participation of newcomers and less experienced pMS in EDA R&T programmes.

This R&T workshop served as an opportunity for Maltese SMEs to be aware of the EDA's work and initiatives on R&T and consequently could possibly lead to potential investment. Malta Enterprise, the main local sponsor for this workshop, also saw it as an opportunity to promote foreign direct investment in Malta through a presentation and one-to-one meetings with visiting large industries and SMEs from EU Member States participating in the workshop. Indeed, a number of Maltese firms have shown interest in this workshop, and in some cases followed it up with bilateral meetings with this Directorate.

EU Funding

External Borders Fund

The Directorate sat on the MJHA Committee set up to select projects submitted for funding under the EU's External Borders Fund (EBF).

The Defence Directorate assisted the AFM in submitting a project under special action funding of the External Borders Fund for the overhaul of helicopter and aircraft engines. MFEI approval for funds in 2010 was obtained in this regard.

During the year, the Director attended the signing of the contracts for the purchase of four inshore patrol boats, a Communications System, and a Maritime patrol Aircraft for the AFM, all financed under the EBF.

Malta's Participation in the 5+5 Defence Initiative

Maltese presidency of the 5+5 Defence initiative

During 2009 Malta assumed the rotating presidency of the 5+5 Defence Initiative during a ministerial meeting held in Tripoli. While generally the rotating presidency lasts for a calendar year, the Maltese Presidency will be eighteen months long to bring the initiative in sync with the annual rotating cycle.

During the year, logistical preparations for the Maltese presidency were in full swing, and a Steering Committee, bringing together high-ranking officials from the Ministries of Defence of the ten western Mediterranean Countries participating in this forum was successfully hosted in Malta. During that meeting, the action plan for 2010, including the Maltese presidency initiative to foster collaboration on Search and Rescue, was endorsed.

To facilitate the hosting of the different initiatives being undertaken under the Maltese Presidency, the Defence Matters Directorate and the AFM set up an ad hoc working group which met a number of times. During 2010 Malta will be organising and hosting two Steering Committee meetings, one meeting for the 5+5 Chiefs of Navy, a Search and Rescue Workshop, and a Ministerial Conference.

Exercise Canale 2009

CANALE is an annual Live Exercise (LIVEX) organised bilaterally between Italy and Malta within the context of the 5+5 Defence Initiative. The 2009 exercise was led by Italy and was held off the eastern coast of Sicily between 18 and 25 September. A VIP day was organised on board an Italian Naval Frigate in Augusta harbour during which Director Defence attended, representing the Prime Minister. During this year's exercise, all 5+5 Defence member states participated by air and naval assets or observers.

Other 5+5 Initiatives

In addition to the presidency initiatives, the Defence Matters Directorate liaised with the AFM's ESDP and International Relations Branch and 5+5 Defence Point of Contacts (PoCs) to ensure the best participation

by Malta in the 5+5 Defence Initiative. During 2009, Malta participated in a number of initiative activities between seminars, conferences, and exercises.

Partnership for Peace

Following Malta's re-activation of its membership of the NATO Partnership for Peace in 2008, during 2009 Malta began establishing its partnership on a sure footing. The Presentation Document and the Individual Partnership Programme were discussed bilaterally with the Atlantic Alliance and eventually approved by NAC. In May, Malta also appointed its ambassador to NATO. Until that day, Director Defence Matters represented Malta in the monthly Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council ambassadors meetings. Finally, Malta was invited to contribute to the discussion launched by NATO on its relationship with the different partners in the context of the ongoing debate on the NATO Strategic Concept.

Malta's Defence Bilateral Relations

Ministerial and Ambassadorial Meetings

A number of briefs were prepared in preparation for bilateral meetings which the President of Malta, the Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Permanent Representative to the EU and/or Maltese ambassadors to third countries had with their counterparts and which had a bearing on/relevance for defence and border control issues.

Amongst others, a comprehensive brief was prepared on Search and Rescue and relevant international legislation regulating SAR matters. The brief was prepared in the context of a disagreement with Italy over the status of the island of Lampedusa as a place of safety where to disembark rescued persons in distress. The disagreement arose over number of cases involving irregular migrants, which were given wide coverage in the international press, and which resulted in disagreement.

The Director also held several meetings with Ambassadors, resident and visiting Defence Attachés to discuss bilateral defence matters and to enhance the AFM's international cooperation as well as to seek military assistance and training opportunities for the AFM.

Landing and Over flights of Foreign State Aircraft

Following the direction imparted in November 2005, this Directorate continued to make recommendations to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs about requests from foreign countries who ask for permission to use Maltese airspace for their aircraft, either for landing or over flights. Around 500 such requests were processed by the Defence Directorate during 2009.

Other Issues

A brief was prepared on defence/security related issues for the meetings of the Malta-Tunisia Mixed Commission.

A Search and Rescue MOU was signed with Libya, and a meeting was hosted in Malta on the implementation thereof. A subsequent meeting was held in Tripoli in December. Furthermore, Director (Defence Matters) participated in the meetings of the Malta-Libya Joint Commission.

On 11 July, the AFM signed an agreement on Search and Rescue with the US Coast Guard (USCG) in a ceremony held at the AFM's Maritime Base in Hay Wharf. The agreement was signed by the Commander AFM and the Commander of the USCG in the presence of the Director. This is the first SAR agreement signed by the USCG with a European nation.

During the year, the Director or Defence Directorate staff participated in a number of meetings with representatives from foreign missions accredited to Malta and attended several meetings and events, both locally and abroad, on defence related issues. Among these activities were:

- several graduation ceremonies of students graduating from courses conducted by the AFM at their SAR Centre;
- AFM activities and exercises held throughout the year;
- meetings with the Captains of visiting military vessels calling for a port visit in Malta;
- meetings on UN sanctions attended by the Director as a member of the Sanctions Monitoring Committee;
- participation in a meeting between the Prime Minister and the Chairman of the NATO Military Committee, Adm di Paola;
- courtesy visit by the newly-appointed Head of the Italian Military Mission in Malta;
- meeting with the French Ambassador in order to discuss possible naval training opportunities for AFM naval officers in French naval academies.

OSCE

OSCE Communications Network

During the period under review, this Office ensured the effective monitoring of the OSCE Communications Network and the timely return of documents which member states are obliged to compile and submit to OSCE from time to time.

Participation in OSCE missions

During 2009, the Directorate facilitated the participation of AFM personnel in three OSCE missions: two in Bosnia and one in Croatia.

Participation in International Cooperation Projects

Bluemass-MED

In April 2009, Malta joined five other EU Mediterranean countries (France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, and Greece) in a pilot project on the integration of maritime surveillance in the Mediterranean Sea and its Atlantic approaches, codenamed Blue Maritime Surveillance System Mediterranean (BLUEMASS – MED or simply BMM). At present, there are various technologies used for maritime surveillance in connection with different needs: coastguard duties, fishing inspections, border guard, police needs, navies, maritime safety, port control, customs, search and rescue, environmental protection and pollution response teams. The project aims to create a demonstrator which brings together different pictures from different technologies (such as the Vessels Traffic Monitoring Systems (VTMS) for traffic control, the Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) for fisheries control, the Automatic Identification System (AIS) for collision avoidance and safety of navigation in general, the SAFESEANET system for monitoring hazardous cargo, Vessel Traffic Service (VTS), radar, satellite, and others) to create a continuous ‘near-real-time’ Shared Basic Common Maritime Picture (SBCMP). OPM, via the Defence Matters Directorate, is the Maltese partner in this project. In this quarter, the partnership agreement was signed after staffing by the Directorate. Director Defence Matters attended a number of meetings on this issue.

Single European Sky - BlueMED

The Office participated proactively in different work-strands led by MITC concerning the implementation of the Single European Sky and the Functional Air Space Blocks (FABs), in particular concerning the BlueMED FAB whereby Greece, Cyprus, Italy, Malta, Albania, Jordan, Egypt and Tunisia are seeking to implement the Single European Sky in the Central and Eastern Mediterranean.

This office helped identify potential sovereignty shortfalls and on a number of occasions it put forward recommendations to make sure that Malta's interests were properly safeguarded, particularly in the long term.

FRONTEX and Irregular Immigration

Director Defence Matters liaised between Detention Services and MJHA concerning the implementation of a number of projects and policies, including EU-funded projects.

On 18 September, Director Defence, accompanied by AFM Liaison Officer flew on board an AFM registered fixed winged aircraft CASA 212 as part of a FRONTEX flight mission. During the flight Director Defence had the opportunity to observe closely AFM personnel in the conduct of a FRONTEX flight mission in the search and rescue area that fall under the responsibility of the Maltese Government.

FRONTEX presentations for Maltese Ambassadors

The Director proposed to the Permanent Secretary MFA that Ambassadors be invited to attend an AFM briefing on FRONTEX, illegal migration and the rescue of persons at sea held at HQAFM. This invitation was accepted. OPM, MFA officers and EU Secretariat and MJHA officials who cover illegal migration issues were also invited to these briefings

Other Security Issues

Government Contingency Centre

The Directorate continued to ensure that the Government Contingency Centre in Castille is ready to be set up at any notice, and making sure that it would be equipped with the necessary facilities.

With this aim in mind, it conducted a dry-run of the Government Contingency Centre at the OPM in the context of the national power outage of 16 June 2009. A number of deficiencies were identified and action was taken for their remedy.

Committee for the Security Requirements at Diplomatic Missions and Residencies

A committee was set up for the Security Requirements at Diplomatic Missions and Residencies. It is composed of representatives from the Malta Police, Armed Forces of Malta, Malta Security Service and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and chaired by Director Defence Matters.

A number of proposals to enhance security thereat were made and a number of meetings were held with the Transport Authority to facilitate the implementation of such measures.

Office Management

Training of Defence Matters Directorate Staff

The Director participated in a Lateral Thinking course organised by the SDO held on 19 October, while the Assistant Director participated in a Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) Course for Senior Managers also organised by the SDO between 6 and 9 October 2009, an ICT Management workshop on 9 March 2009, and a course on Performance Appraisal – systems, processes, techniques and skills hosted by the Foundation for Human Resources Development in January 2009.

The AFM's liaison officer participated in the 4th Engaging Governments on Genocide Prevention Program (EGGP) which was organised by the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution (ICAR) at George Mason University, the United Nations Study Programme (UNSP) together with the Centre for International

Conflict Resolution (CICR) at Columbia University. This training session was held at George Mason University in Washington DC United States of America between 26 and 30 January 2009. The EGGP programme is designed to help governments recognise and respond effectively to situations that bear warning signs of genocide before these signs develop into fully-fledged crisis. Moreover, this programme aspires to reach representatives from all the UN member states over the next four years.

During the year, other Directorate staff attended various courses organised by SDO.

Data Protection and Freedom of Information

The Directorate's Data Protection Officer attended a meeting for Data Protection Officers on 20 October 2009. During this meeting the newly appointed Data Protection Commissioner, Mr Joseph Ebejer was introduced to all and data protection of the various access control measures in place were discussed.

This Office nominated a Freedom of Information Officer and an alternate officer to represent the Directorate in the processing of requests for documents or information of the Freedom of Information Act (Cap.496). It also began preparing itself for the entry into force of the FOI Act in 2010.

Environmental issues

Throughout this quarter, this Directorate continued putting emphasis on the need to implement environment-related (as well as cost-saving) initiatives including waste (paper, plastic) separation at origin, re-use of paper and envelopes, the use of degradable bags for disposal of waste and using a freeware software ensuring that two pages fit on each folio, printing was done on both sides of the page with an effective saving on paper consumption of between 66% and 75%.

VANESSA FRAZIER
Director (Defence Matters)

Planning and Priorities Coordination Division

INTRODUCTION

In 2009 the main functions of the Planning Priorities Coordination Division were to:

- act as the National Aid Coordinator in respect of the EU Transition Facility and the accession-related bilateral technical assistance made available to Malta;
- act as Managing Authority for the Structural Funds and Cohesion Fund 2004-2006;
- act as Managing Authority for the Community Initiative EQUAL;
- act as the National Contact Point for the Community Initiative Interreg III (2004-2006);
- act as the National Coordinator for Territorial Cooperation Programmes (2007-2013) and the ENPI CBC Med Programme;
- act as coordinating body of the EU Solidarity Fund grant;
- act as Managing Authority for the European Globalisation Fund;
- act as Managing Authority for the Cohesion Policy Funds 2007-2013;
- steer the project selection process for Operational Programmes I and II (2007-2013);
- close the fifth Italo-Maltese Financial Protocol;
- act as the National Focal Point (NFP) for the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms;
- act as the National Coordination Unit (NCU) for the Swiss-Maltese Cooperation Programme;
- strengthen the Division's administrative capacity in view of the 2007-2013 Cohesion Policy financial perspective; and
- co-ordinate EU Affairs activities falling under the mandate of the Office of the Prime Minister.

OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITIES

Transition Facility

Projects under the 2006 programme (total value €3,688,500 [Malta €373,500, EU €3.315 million]) continued to be progressively implemented through to their conclusion. The contract execution deadline expired on 15 December 2008 and, by end of 2009, 62% of the EU funds contracted had been disbursed.

Individual projects were given publicity - mostly in the form of press conferences or newspaper articles - during the course of their implementation.

Monitoring and Evaluation of Transition Facility Programmes

The first round of Monitoring Sub-Committee (MSC) meetings for the year was held in March 2009. At the MSC the implementation progress of each project was reviewed and discussed. The thirteenth Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC) was executed by written procedure during May 2008. The second round of MSC meetings for 2009 (and final one) took place in November with the fourteenth and final JMC being scheduled to be carried out by written procedure in February 2010.

For each JMC a detailed Implementation Status Report was drawn up by PPCD. Independent evaluation (co-ordinated by PPCD) of the projects being monitored was carried out and reports were presented to the authorities in April 2009 and December 2009 in time for the two JMCs mentioned above.

Structural Funds and Cohesion Fund 2004 – 2006

Single Programming Document

Following the European Commission's proposal to extend the final date of eligibility of 2000-2006 programmes due to the global economic downturn, and Malta's subsequent duly justified request, approval was granted in February 2009 to extend the Programme to end of June 2009. As a result, a number of projects were prolonged, thus ensuring optimal absorption of funds. The Division, acting in its capacity as Managing Authority, intensified monitoring activities, continued the first level control of all projects as well as the preparation of requests to the Commission for interim payments and the ongoing publicity of the results obtained through the 2004-2006 Structural Funds programme.

A good number of projects had been completed in 2008 and accordingly, the Beneficiaries submitted the relevant closure reports to the Managing Authority in 2009. During the first half of the year in review, the Division also paid close attention to the continued implementation of projects that were being co-financed under the various measures of the Single Programming Document and which were still ongoing.

The only meeting of the Monitoring Committee for the 2004-2006 Structural Funds was held in May 2009. At that meeting, the Managing Authority gave an update on the final stages of implementation. During the same meeting, two studies entitled *Analysis of the Impact and Effectiveness of Projects under Structural Funds Programme for Malta 2004-2006* and *Tracer Study of Participants in Projects funded by the European Social Fund 2004-2006* were presented by the Managing Authority and approved by the Monitoring Committee.

Malta submitted to the Commission one request for reimbursement of eligible expenditure under the Single Programming Document. The following amounts were claimed under each Fund (EU share only):

European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)	€5,407,921
European Social Fund (ESF)	€297,131
European Agriculture Guarantee & Guidance Fund (EAGGF) – Guidance Section	€346,819
Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance (FIFG)	€95,651
Total	€6,147,152

The Division continued to undertake the implementation of management controls in terms of Article 4 of EC Regulation 438/2001 in order to verify the delivery of the supplies and services co-financed by the Structural Funds. A total of 21 on-the-spot checks were executed on final Beneficiaries in 2009. The Managing Authority also accompanied final Beneficiaries administering aid schemes to 14 checks on Final Recipients (enterprises). In addition, two documentary spot checks were carried out on the Intermediate Bodies for EAGGF and FIFG.

Finally, PPCD participated in a number of evaluations that were carried out during 2009 as part of the European Commission's ex-post evaluation of the 2000-2006 programmes in all Member States.

Cohesion Fund

Works on all three stretches of the TEN-T road network were completed by December 2008 but the additional reinforcement works required by a third party on the St Paul's Bay Bypass was completed in July 2009. In 2009, Malta declared to the European Commission a total of €475,439.57 (EU share) for reimbursement. A second request to modify the TEN-T Commission Decision was submitted to the Commission in July. The request was made to enable the upgrading of an additional stretch of Mgarr Road, Ghajnsielem (Gozo). Work on this additional stretch is due to start in the first quarter of 2010.

Upgrading of the Sant'Antnin Waste Treatment Plant continued at a significant pace in 2009. Works on the Digestion Plant continued to advance and the equipment of the Mechanical Treatment Plant was

installed. Meanwhile, the Materials Recycling Facility has been operational since February 2008. In 2009 Malta submitted to the European Commission a total of €914,343.56 (EU share) for reimbursement.

Preparatory studies on future projects related to the management of storm water and treatment of solid waste also advanced and both projects have reached their concluding phases. In 2009 Malta submitted to the European Commission a total of €85,461.78 (EU share) for reimbursement.

Monitoring Committee meetings for the Cohesion Fund were held in May and November 2009. Annual Reports were submitted to the European Commission in July for the Environment and Technical Assistance projects and in August for the TEN-T Roads project. An on-site visit by the European Commission to the TENT-T Road Network was organised in November.

During 2009, on-the-spot checks on all three Cohesion Fund projects were carried out by the Managing Authority.

EQUAL

The possibility to extend the final date of eligibility also applied to the EQUAL Community Initiative. Therefore, following approval by the Commission of the request, one EQUAL project was extended in order to absorb the savings that had arisen.

The Managing Authority, in collaboration with the Intermediate Body within the Ministry for Social Policy participated and contributed in ex-post evaluations which were carried out by the European Commission.

The final EQUAL Monitoring Committee meeting took place in May 2009.

One payment request for reimbursement of eligible expenditure was forwarded to the Commission. This amounted to €86,149 (EU share).

EU Cohesion Policy 2007-2013

In 2009, the main responsibility in this area was the steering of the project selection process, strengthening and adapting the implementation system (including procedures, manuals and electronic database); the signing of Grant Agreements and the monitoring of implementation. In 2009 the first requests for reimbursements were made to the EC.

In terms of Operational Programme I (OP I), the Managing Authority continued with the evaluation of submissions received following calls for proposals during 2008. A total of 17 projects were approved following the second call under the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) which covered Priority Axis 1 (Enhancing Knowledge and Innovation), Priority Axis 4 (Upgrading Services of General Economic Interest) and Priority Axis 6 (Urban Regeneration and Improving the Quality of Life). Meanwhile, six projects were approved following the third call under the ERDF involving Priority Axis 2 (Promoting Sustainable Tourism). This call was specifically tailored for non-governmental and voluntary organisations. Under OP I, Malta has also started the process of setting up a financial engineering measure which will be financed through ERDF.

During the course of 2009, four further calls were issued under the ERDF. The fourth and sixth calls involved Priority Axis 6; and the fifth and seventh calls concerned Priority Axis 4. The project proposals received under these calls were still under evaluation at the end of 2009.

Two calls for non-major projects under the Cohesion Fund were also issued during the course of 2009. Two projects were approved under the first call, whilst the second call was still open at the end of the year. In terms of major projects, the application for Phase 1 of the TEN-T road infrastructure project was

submitted to the European Commission for a Decision whilst work continued on the preparation of the other major projects.

Up till 31 December 2009, a total of 53 projects had been selected under OP I, for a total value of €242,670,816¹. Further to this, three Covenant Agreements were signed with three Intermediary Bodies (Malta Enterprise, Tourism and Sustainable Development Unit and Department for Social Welfare Standards). The total value for the nine Aid Schemes amounts to €47,500,000 bringing the total OP I allocation committed up to €290,170,816.

Following calls launched in the previous year under Operational Programme II (OP II), approvals were given to three projects submitted in response to the call under Priority Axis 3 (Promoting an Equal and Inclusive Labour Market). This call was restricted to non-governmental organisations and social partners. Following the call under Priority Axis 4 (Strengthening of Institutional and Administrative Capacity), seven projects were approved, two of which were submitted by social partners. Grant Agreements in respect of 24 projects were signed between the Managing Authority and Beneficiaries. Two covenants were signed with the Employment and Training Corporation as Intermediate Body for the two Aid Schemes.

For each Operational Programme, two Monitoring Committee meetings were held: in May and November. During both meetings the Managing Authority reported on the progress of the Programmes. Both Committees approved the Annual Implementation Reports for 2008 during the meetings held in May. At the May meeting of the Monitoring Committee for OP I, a second change to the Operational Programme I was approved. Amendments to the criteria for the Aid Schemes under OP II were presented by the Intermediate Body to the Monitoring Committee for OP II during the November meeting.

Two requests for reimbursement of eligible expenditure under each Operational Programme were sent to the Commission, one in May and another in December. The following amounts (EU share) were verified:

European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)	€5,354,768
European Social Fund (ESF)	€575,596
Cohesion Fund	€13,183,943
Total	€19,114,307

PPCD's website continued to be updated on a regular basis with all the latest information related to the calls for project proposals, events and other important documents.

The 2009 Annual Event took the form of two national conferences on Cohesion Policy 2007-2013 that were held on 1 December 2009 in Malta and on 4 December 2009 in Gozo. The conferences focused on the benefits derived by the Maltese and Gozitan public through the implementation of the two OPs, as well as the progress achieved to date in addressing the identified priorities. The conferences featured keynote speakers, beneficiaries and discussion panels on the various strategic themes targeted under the Operational Programmes.

A total of 287 officials received training in the implementation of the programmes over the year. Participants came from the Programmes' Beneficiaries, including NGOs, as well as public officers and new recruits in the Public Sector involved in the management and implementation of the Cohesion Policy funds.

¹ Includes ERDF and non-major Cohesion Fund projects

Territorial Cooperation

Interreg III (2004 – 2006)

In view of its role as the first level control body for Interreg programmes, PPCD verified €1.03 million (EU share) worth of claims in connection with expenditure incurred under Interreg projects, bringing the total amount verified in connection with such projects to €3.90 million. This is 71% more than Malta's original contribution to the programmes (€2.27 million). Furthermore, in view of the control actions required for such programmes, 36 on-the-spot checks were executed by PPCD on Maltese partners. These were complemented by a system audit on the Archimed programme and also by external checks on three Archimed projects and on two projects co-financed under the MEDOC programme.

Territorial Cooperation Programmes 2007 – 2013

With regard to Malta's participation in the 2007-2013 programmes, PPCD monitored the projects that were selected under the first calls for project proposals and verified €23,845 of expenditure incurred in connection with such projects.

The Division coordinated the second call for projects under the IVC and Med programmes and contributed towards the approval of new projects. Out of the projects selected for funding under such programmes, 13 projects with an EU contribution of €2.07 million include Maltese partners. PPCD was also involved in the coordination of the third call under the IVC programme, which was launched in December 2009 and which focused specifically on capitalisation projects.

The first call under the ENPI CBC Med programme was also launched in 2009; to this end two information days and several bilateral meetings were held with Maltese potential partners. PPCD also contributed towards the preparation of the calls for strategic projects under the Med and ENPI CBC Med programmes which were envisaged to be launched in 2010.

Information about the fourth call for project proposals under the ESPON II programme was disseminated. The evaluation of project proposals took place in November and an expert from MEPA participated in the process. In 2009, €15,233.58 (EU share) worth of claims was verified by the Division.

Bilateral Assistance

European Economic Area (EEA) and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms

During 2009, a number of Project Implementation Reports (PIRs) were verified by PPCD and the respective reimbursements amounting to €805,375 were received from the Donors. PPCD also received the approval on the re-allocation of savings and unallocated funds to project MT0012 *Consolidation of Terrain and Historic Ramparts Underlying Council Square, Mdina*. Following this approval, the Project Implementation Plan (PIP) was revised accordingly. An Implementation Agreement was signed concerning project MT0014 *Conservation of Hal Saflieni Hypogeum World Heritage Site* after its PIP was approved by the Financial Mechanism Office (FMO). Two of the projects have already finalised their implementation phases with the remaining five being at an advanced stage. In view of the control actions required for these financial mechanisms, 13 on-the-spot checks were carried out by PPCD. In addition, external monitoring by the FMO was carried out on two projects.

The Monitoring Committee was convened in September and this was followed by the annual meeting in the beginning of October. As part of the annual meeting, the FMO and the Norwegian delegation had the opportunity to visit two of the co-financed projects. Another site visit to two other projects was organised for the Norwegian Secretary of State at the end of October.

Swiss-Maltese Cooperation Programme

The allocation committed by Switzerland for Malta is SFr 2.994 million. The thematic focus of the Swiss-Maltese Cooperation Programme is the health sector with an indicative financial allocation of SFr 2.794 million².

In February 2009, the Swiss authorities approved the outline PET/CT scanner proposal. This was one of the three health sector project proposals that PPCD had submitted to the Swiss Development Corporation in 2008. Following this approval, PPCD worked closely with the Health Division within the Ministry for Social Policy to elaborate the final, detailed proposal. This detailed proposal was submitted to Switzerland in June 2009 and it was followed by an on-site visit by the Swiss in November. Approval is expected in the first quarter of 2010.

The Technical Assistance Fund Agreement was signed on 1 March 2009. The hiring of consultants for the preparation, monitoring and review of the health sector project and of the Cooperation Programme; participation in meetings with Swiss authorities held outside of Malta, organisation of Annual Meetings and publicity at Programme level have been identified as eligible for support under the Agreement.

The first annual meeting of the Swiss-Maltese Cooperation Programme took place in Malta in June 2009.

V Italo-Maltese Financial Protocol

In 2009, PPCD liaised with the Maltese Embassy in Rome in view of the transfer of funds in connection with the final claim for reimbursement under the V Italo-Maltese Financial Protocol. The respective amount i.e. €350,266 was reimbursed in December 2009. This brings the total amount claimed and received under the Protocol to €74,792,921 which is equivalent to 99.7% of the budgetary allocation (€75 million).

EU Globalisation Fund

In the first quarter of 2009, PPCD carried out on-the-spot checks both on the Employment and Training Corporation and Beneficiaries in view of closure. The fourth EUGF Steering Committee meeting was held in February 2009. In the following month, the Division submitted the Final Report to the European Commission. PPCD also provided comments on the changes proposed by the European Commission on the European Globalisation Fund regulatory package.

EU Affairs Directorate

During 2009, the EU Affairs Directorate continued to perform its main role of managing and co-ordinating OPM's participation in EU structures and processes. To this effect, it regularly represented OPM in the meetings of the Inter-Ministerial Committee for EU Affairs. Besides, it also took part in various other EU-related meetings, both locally and abroad, aimed at drawing up and consolidating the Malta position on the different EU legislative proposals. The Directorate continued to form part of the Flexicurity Working Group, the Single European Sky and Blue Med Steering Committee, as well as the Policies and Measures (PAMs) Working Group. The Directorate also started to participate in the meetings of the General Affairs (Sectoral) Committee of MEUSAC.

² Up to SFr 0.15 million is being retained by Switzerland to cover its administration costs of the Programme. The remaining SFr 0.05 million have been allocated to technical assistance and administration of the Programme on the Maltese side.

Administrative Capacity

Due to the continuing growth of PPCD as well as the high staff turnover, the administrative capacity of the Division was further strengthened in 2009. Structural and further maintenance works have also been carried out in the premises at No, 12 and No, 13 St Paul Street.

MARLENE BONNICI

Director General (Planning & Priorities Coordination)

Information Management Unit

INTRODUCTION

The Information Management Unit (IMU) is the ministerial central ICT office, providing advice and support to departments and authorities within the Office of the Prime Minister. The main IMU business functions include: drawing up of OPM ICT plans; the management of ICT project design, procurement and financing; management of information systems policy; application development and open source/standards research; management of hardware inventories; authorisation and provision of information services; liaison with suppliers providing information technology services including services rendered by MITA; management of data centre facilities; and providing first-hand operational support on infrastructure.

IMU OPERATIONAL REVIEW

During the course of 2009, the Information Management Unit integrated a number of operational reviews with the IT unit at MTA. This arrangement was made possible following the consolidation of office space in September 2008. The new IMU configuration brought about new challenges on all fronts of ICT management. Increased cooperation between the Ministry and the Authority led to more efficient ways of working and service delivery, through the sharing of resources and competences. Established information systems such as task handling and collaboration and financial & project management, were further refined in an attempt to maximise resources available.

MAIN ACTIVITIES

LAN Improvements

The LAN improvement project that kicked off in 2008 was continued in 2009. The OPM local area network was further upgraded by replacing a substantial amount of networking equipment in a number of departments. The LAN improvement project in 2009 focused mainly on the upgrade of remote offices.

The main tasks with respect to LAN improvements include procurement of networking hardware and liaising with third party suppliers, laying of appropriate infrastructure, configuration of active equipment, implementation of security standards such as port locking, segregation of VLANs for increased security, reorganisation of networking cabinet by putting in place apposite cable management hardware.

Telephony

The PABX infrastructure at Auberge de Castille was upgraded ensuring a higher degree of service redundancy. A new service level agreement was secured with the supplier towards the end of 2009.

At MTA, the connection between Auberge d'Italie and the Enforcement Office outpost in Msida was upgraded.

ICT Portfolio Management

The ICT Ministerial Portfolio Management was further developed in 2009, to draw together information about assets, users and systems within the Ministry. Through the portfolio management application information assets, software applications and hardware in use by all departments and entities are electronically maintained. The application includes also network management and layouts. The updated ICT portfolio also includes information about printing equipment within departments and access control information within buildings.

The objective of a Ministerial ICT portfolio management solution is the quantification and specification of ICT assets to enable objective evaluation of investment scenarios, thus assisting the decision-making process relating to new IT systems and technology refresh initiatives. Other benefits emanating from the system include desktop management, along with standardisation of procedures and methods relating to ICT resources.

Provision of MITA Services

In 2009, circa 3,500 requests for services from MITA were vetted and registered. Provision of services for all OPM users is provided through the MITA eRFS (Electronic Request for Service) system. Provision of standard MITA services include: creation/deletion of email/internet/corp accounts; creation/deletion of shared folders; providing/revoking access rights to shared folders; creation/deletion of generic email accounts; and provision of fast remote connections. The eRFS system provides for internet packages management for all users. Additionally, 90% of the systems and applications hosted at MITA feature in the eRFS application allowing for standardised user creation/modification/deletion.

Information Security Audit Review Follow-up

Following an Information Security Audit review held in 2008, carried out by the Compliance Unit within MITA in line with the requirements of section 4.1 of Government's Compliance Policy and Directive (GMICT P 0018:2007), a number of initiatives were addressed in 2009. Such initiatives included the vetting of standard security management procedures, the information security planning review adopted by the Ministry, business continuity planning and standards relating to physical security.

OPM Data Centre Upgrade

A project to upgrade the data centre at OPM kicked off in 2009. The project is expected to take a number of months to complete addressing a number of important features such as power redundancy, cooling systems, energy distribution and new security features.

Additional Development on the OPM Website

The main enhancements made to the opm.gov.mt site in 2009 include a visual interface in relation to the National Budgeting process, integration of video podcasts and enabling increased communication flexibility through mobile text messaging. Additionally, an interactive photo gallery and features of the forthcoming Valletta project amongst other features was added to the site.

Additional functionality to OPM-Central

The OPM-Central Database is the core of the IMU's initiative to renovate and update all OPM websites in both design and information content and management. The project aims to improve the look and feel of OPM websites, while addressing issues of duplicated resources, ensuring information consistency across the Ministry's portals and sites.

The OPM-Central incorporates a common Content Management System, which among several functions provides shared modular resources which include the following: News Manager, Press Releases Manager, File Manager; Employment/Scholarship Manager, Public Tenders Manager; Photo Gallery Manager, Survey Manager; and Podcast Manager.

Roll out and new functionality enablement of the Government IntraNet

In 2009, the Government Intranet for the Public Service was completely rolled out. This project is the first of its kind built using open source/standards technology. The new IntraNet includes a number of features such as restricted areas, online forms and RSS feeds support.

The hosting environment is also based on an open-source products with a consequent significant cost saving. Support on the hosting environment is supplied by MITA where as the maintenance side of the application is done in-house. The main driver to the development of this new IntraNet solution is that of setting up a more engaging utility and a sleek design allowing for increased user interaction. 2009 saw the preparation and initial testing of an HR skills profiling questionnaire intended to reach across the Public Administration.

OPR website: president.gov.mt

The Office of the President website was published and fully integrated to the OPM-Central last February 2009. The site includes the following common modules: News/Events, Press releases, and a Photo Gallery. The website provides information about the President of Malta, previous Presidents, President events and a walk virtual tours of the Presidential Palaces.

Licensing Application at the Malta Tourism Authority

A steering committee was put together to analyse the current licensing process and propose new efficient ways of delivering such service. Following a number of workshops it was established that the new licensing project is to include the following three main modules:

- *Applications for Licences:* The first module will be a web application through which the general public and license holders will be able to submit various application forms with the possibility of handling payments.
- *Licensing Module:* This will handle the back-office operations involved with the maintenance of all licences. This module will be fully integrated with your Access Accounts application and will include the functionality currently provided by the Tourist Services Providers Database System and any other requirements.
- *Enforcement of Licence Conditions:* This module will support enforcement officers in their duties during routine inspections by providing relevant information on the spot and allowing the input of notes and other data pertaining to the inspection.

Visit Malta Portal

In 2009, the visitmalta.com tourism portal continued to be developed and enhanced. A number of new videos, several electronic brochures, and e-tours for Valletta and Cottonera were uploaded. Special offers provided by tour-operators were included in an apposite section specifically designed for this purpose. Additional information listing special deals available exclusively for travel agents added.

The Visitmalta.com portal attracts over three million visitors per annum, with a daily average of more than 8,500 visitors, and with peaks of more than 18,000 visits a day. This notwithstanding, a steering committee for the redesign of the new VisitMalta was appointed in 2009. A number of meetings were held concluding the first phase of requirements gathering.

Evaluation of Proposed Projects financed through EU Tourism Schemes

In 2009, a number of proposal submitted under the EU tourism-related scheme were evaluated in terms of ICT.

ESF Training Project for Officers within the Public Administration

An ESF project for the training of ICT personnel engaged at the various Information Management Units with government ministries was submitted. The project was successful and approved end of 2009.

Tourism & Sustainable Development and Local Government sub-site within the new OPM website

Two sites were developed under the opm.gov.mt site. The sites developed include the Tourism & Sustainable Development Unit and the Department of Local Government.

Registration and Review Board Website

A website to cater for the requirements submitted by the Registration and Review Board RRB established by the Environmental Impact Assessment EIA Regulations was set up in 2009. The website is information-based and is integrated to the OPM central setup.

ICT governance related Information Snippets

Monthly snippets with ICT best practices and policies were circulated via e-mail to all users to all at OPM. The concept behind the circulation of such snippets is to make users aware of a number of policies, procedures and obligations in a simplified way. The snippets drawn up are mostly based on GMICT policy.

SEA Website

The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) website was released November 2009. The SEA website outlines the framework for providing a high level of protection of the environment by ensuring that the environmental dimension is integrated in the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes by Government.

The website contributes towards the promotion of sustainable development ensuring that an environmental assessment is carried out on plans and programmes and that these are also subject to the widest possible level of public consultation.

ROBERT DEBONO
Chief Information Officer

Corporate Services Directorate

INTRODUCTION

The role of the Directorate of Corporate Services is to provide support services to the secretariats, divisions, departments and entities at the Office of the Prime Minister. In addition, the Department also provides a service on a corporate level to the departments and entities forming part of the Ministry.

The set-up of the Directorate is made up of the following four branches:

- Finance and Administration
- Office Management
- Human Resources
- Registry

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

During 2009, the Finance and Administration Branch continued to provide the service related to financial administration to the secretariats, divisions and entities that form part of the Office of the Prime Minister.

The Branch was responsible for the administration of funds provided under Vote 5 - Office of the Prime Minister and of Vote 8 - Tourism. The Branch also had the financial responsibility of Capital Projects included under the Office of the Prime Minister and the Tourism Department. The role of the Branch included the procurement of stores and services, the management of the funds on a daily basis, the raising of the monthly revised estimates and coordinating the funds allocated under all other Votes of the departments under the Ministry. Another important role was the drafting of the Ministry's annual financial estimates for consideration by the Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Investment.

A total of six departmental tenders were issued during the year. The service provided included the drafting assisting in the adjudication report and ensuring that the Contracts Department Regulations were adhered to.

Another important role covered by the Branch is the service related to the issue of travel advances to officials travelling overseas on official business. During 2009 a total number of 286 and 43 Advances were issued to officers at the Office of the Prime Minister and Tourism Department respectively.

The Branch continued to issue commitments for the supply of goods and services by not later than one day of having received the request and settled invoices within one month of being received. The total number of transactions effected on the Departmental Accounting System was 11,540 for the Office of the Prime Minister and 1,118 for the Tourism Department.

The Branch also closely worked with the Information Management Unit as regards the financing of enhancements of IT projects in the Ministry.

Other work carried out by the Branch during 2009 consisted of:

- raising information on a quarterly basis related to Accrual Accounting;
- raising of claims for reimbursements of EU-funded projects;

- raising of financial returns as requested by the Ministry of Finance and Treasury Department;
- submitting to the VAT Department a list of suppliers who do not provide the Directorate with a fiscal receipt;
- the recording of newly acquired movable and immovable assets and informing departments to update the respective Asset Inventory records.

OFFICE MANAGEMENT

The Office Management Branch continued with its ongoing programme regarding the maintenance of premises housing the secretariats, divisions and departments forming part of the Office of the Prime Minister. Furthermore, the Branch also provided support for the maintenance at Girgenti Palace, Villa Francia, MEUSAC, Management Efficiency Unit and Employment Commission.

During the year, a number of maintenance agreements were drawn up. These agreements were necessary in order to ensure that the basic services provided were regularly monitored by qualified technical personnel. One project that was concluded during the year was the replacement of the air-conditioning system in the Ambassador's Hall at this Office.

The Office Management Branch was also responsible for the disposing of obsolete and unserviceable items which were no longer required by the various departments at this Office. The Inventory of the Directorate's Assets is also administered by the Branch.

Other responsibilities carried out by the Branch were the issue of fuel requisitions as per regulations of the Office's fleet of motor vehicles and the maintenance of the fleet. Quotations for the hiring of vehicles were also obtained and vehicles hired after obtaining the necessary approvals. Vehicles that were no longer roadworthy or economical to run were disposed of. Where necessary, the Branch obtained legal advice from the Attorney General's office regarding collisions with third parties.

Reception duties were provided by staff at this Directorate and assistance was also provided during press conferences held by the Prime Minister. The Branch also actively participated in the annual *Notte Bianca* and other events held during the year at the Auberge de Castille.

Other work carried out by the Branch included: providing support in work related to tenders; obtaining quotes for the procurement of furniture items; and ensuring that energy saving lighting is installed where possible.

HUMAN RESOURCES

As in previous years, one of the important role of the Human Resources Branch was the raising of new contracts or the renewal of contracts of staff at the Prime Minister's Secretariat, Parliamentary Secretary for Tourism and the Parliamentary Secretary Public Dialogue and Information. In addition, contracts of newly appointed staff at the EU Secretariat and the Planning and Priorities Coordination Division were also drawn up as necessary.

The Human Resources Branch was also responsible for the payment of the four weekly salary payments of all staff at the Office of the Prime Minister including MEUSAC, MEU, Employment Commission and also Tourism Department staff. During the year the Beach-cleaning Section of the Tourism Department was transferred to the Ministry for Resources and Rural Affairs and although payment of salaries continued to be paid by this Branch the responsibility of the duties was passed to the new Ministry. The Branch was also involved in the 2010 Budgeting and 2009 Revised Estimates as regards Personal Emoluments.

Letters of Appointment to staff who were promoted after a number of years in the grade and letters of Progression from one scale to another were issued during the year.

Three calls for the position of Assistant Director at the Office of the Prime Minister were issued to appoint officers at the: Department of Information; Finance and Administration – Corporate Services Directorate; Support Services – Planning and Priorities Coordination Division. A call for the post of Technical Officer within the Corporate Services Directorate was also issued.

Other work carried out by the Branch included:

- coordinating work related to family-friendly measures;
- issue of a call for quotations for the provision of sick leave verification in the Ministry;
- matters related to Data Protection, Gender Issues and Health and Safety in the Directorate;
- administering the Performance Management Programmes;
- updating of the Ministry's staff list;
- coordinating the quarterly approvals for the performance of overtime.

REGISTRY

The Registry Section continued providing service for the secretariats and departments at the Office of the Prime Minister. During the year the Section handled the following:

Letters registered on DOCREG system	4,442
New OPM files	2,565
New MPO files	8,705
Personal	689
Parliamentary Questions	1,454
Distribution of OPM / MPO Circulars	150
Insertion of letters in various files	13,346

ALEXANDER MAGRO
Director (Corporate Services)

Operations and Programme Implementation Directorate

INTRODUCTION

The Operations and Programme Implementation Directorate (OPI) is responsible for managing the implementation of corporate initiatives, particularly ensuring compliance by government departments with the Data Protection Act. It also monitors and facilitates the implementation of OPM's change management programmes and activities, including customer care and green initiatives. The Directorate also co-ordinates the implementation of projects undertaken by OPM departments and entities and co-financed from EU Structural Funds during the 2007-2013 programming period.

OPERATIONAL ISSUES

The Directorate provides support in monitoring the implementation of certain policy decisions and corporate initiatives that are led by the Office of the Prime Minister. This includes regular co-ordination with other ministries and departments to provide clarification and interpretation of policies that affect their operations.

Annual Reports of Government Departments

In the early months of 2009, OPI again undertook the task of compiling, vetting and editing of reports submitted by government departments concerning their activities in the previous year. The consolidated publication *2008 Annual Report of Government Departments* was published on CD in April 2009 and posted on the Public Service Intranet for greater accessibility by public officers.

Boards and Committees

The Operations and Programme Implementation Directorate processes all appointments of constitutional commissions as well as appointments on boards and committees which require the approval of the President of Malta and/or the Prime Minister. It also keeps a detailed record of all government entities, boards and committees through liaison with the various other ministries. This Office processed all correspondence related to the appointments on the boards and committees that required the approval of the President and on those that required the approval of the Prime Minister. The database of official boards and committees was kept updated and press releases and the Government Gazette were monitored regularly.

Broadcasting

One of the responsibilities of the Office of the Prime Minister is the regulatory aspect of Broadcasting. During 2009, this Directorate liaised with the Broadcasting Authority on issues relating to legal and procedural matters which require reference to the Prime Minister in terms of the Constitution and the Broadcasting Act (Cap 350), particularly the publication of subsidiary broadcasting legislation. OPI handled arrangements in connection with the publication of amendments to the Broadcasting Act and the issue of related legal notices.

Following the publication of Government's Policy and Strategy for Digital Broadcasting early in 2009, a Digital Switchover Steering Committee was set up under the chairmanship of the Malta Communications Authority and composed of representatives from various ministries and entities, with responsibility for coordinating and overseeing the implementation of a programme leading to the digital migration of free-to-air television broadcasting. As OPM representative, the Director OPI participated in monthly Committee meetings during the year.

As has been the practice since 1991, Government awards annually a bursary of a maximum value of €5,000 with the aim of improving journalistic standards in the broadcasting field. The Harold Scorey Scholarship in Broadcast Journalism is open to journalists already working in the broadcasting media or aspiring journalists interested in developing their skills in broadcast journalism. The successful candidate, Ms Rosemarie Dorekens, a fourth-year B.Com student at the University of Malta, attended a three-week attachment with The World Tonight and HARDtalk in BBC News during December 2009.

DATA PROTECTION

Data Protection compliance in the Public Service remains the primary corporate initiative under the responsibility of the Directorate. By means of this project, the OPM Data Protection Team (composed of OPI and MITA personnel) offers advice and assistance to ministries and departments in the field of data protection.

Extensive advice on a wide variety of data protection issues was extended to a large number of government offices in the course of the year. Foremost among these, the OPM DP Team was involved in conducting research, organising several meetings and holding discussions about data protection implications and requirements related to certain corporate initiatives such as the development of guidelines by the Ministry for Justice and Home Affairs in connection with the Freedom of Information Act; the launching by the Management and Personnel Office of the two projects on attendance verification systems and skills profiling, as well as an Enterprise Information Management Solution strategy being articulated by MITA in collaboration with the Management Efficiency Unit. The DP Team also facilitated the development of data protection corporate procedures related to the state education sector as well as other data protection framework documents related to the social security and commerce sectors.

Support is also afforded to departments in case of queries received from the Information and Data Protection Commissioner (IDPC), where the OPI acts as intermediary between the IDPC and the relevant departments to discuss and settle any data protection issues.

Data protection auditing continued in a number of departments throughout the year. These audits delve into all aspects of a department's activities and conduct a review of the extent of compliance with the Data Protection Act. In the past year, 12 data protection full audits were concluded in six different ministries (two at the Office of the Prime Minister; one at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; four at the Ministry for Gozo; one at the Ministry for Infrastructure, Transport and Communications; one at the Ministry for Social Policy; and two at the Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Investment) as well as at the House of Representatives. Ten other reviews were being conducted as at end year.

An important component of the compliance project is the provision of data protection training in order to sustain and enhance public officers' knowledge of data protection requirements. Fifteen half-day sessions of data protection training were organised in conjunction with SDO this year, including a specialised DP presentation delivered to Service Managers at the Student Services Department.

During 2009, the Public Service Intranet was re-designed and updated. OPI, guided by DOI, transferred all documents relevant to the Data Protection Restricted Section from the old to the new site.

PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of Eco-friendly Initiatives

Throughout the year, this Directorate continued to monitor the implementation of environment practices across the Office of the Prime Minister and to extend assistance and support to the Green Focal Points (GFPs) in OPM departments and entities.

The projects launched in the previous years to promote eco-friendly practices in the workplace were sustained and further extended in 2009 through the application of added initiatives such as:

- enhancing greater environmental awareness among OPM employees through the organisation of information sessions on waste separation in co-operation with WasteServ; just under 1,200 employees from across all departments and entities within OPM participated;
- organising a one-day off-site workshop for OPM GFPs, at which a representative from Hilton Malta was invited to deliver a presentation on environmentally-sustainable practices implemented by the hotel. Group exercises organised during the workshop also served to generate new ideas for future activities and initiatives that could be adopted to reinforce green work practices within the Ministry;
- the commissioning of energy audits at the Auberge de Castille and the Auberge d'Italie, which are OPM's two main buildings. The audit reports were concluded and appropriate follow-up action on the recommendations will be commenced in the course of the year 2010;
- procurement of PVC signs encouraging the use of stairs instead of lifts, to be affixed in OPM departments and entities, where applicable;
- compilation of 'green' statistics, through the Green Focal Points, intended to monitor electricity and water consumption, the procurement of paper and envelopes, number of cartridges and toners returned to WasteServ and to suppliers, and amount of separated waste collected by WasteServ;
- the setting up of a task force in order to facilitate OPM participation in the next clean-up campaign to be organised by MRRA;
- the launching of an OPM initiative, encouraging OPM employees to contribute, on a voluntary basis, €1 from their salary each pay period as a contribution towards the collective planting of trees by OPM; an office circular was disseminated among all OPM employees and flyers and posters were printed and distributed to all OPM GFPs to help them to promote the initiative.

Coordination of 2007-2013 Cohesion Funds

As one of its line ministry functions in relation to 2007-2013 EU projects, the Directorate provides ongoing support to project leaders implementing projects in departments/entities falling within the remit of the Office of the Prime Minister. Assistance is provided from the pre-application stage right through to project closure stage.

Besides ensuring that timely information on issues related to Structural Funds was passed on to OPM departments and entities, the Directorate in 2009 was involved in the vetting and endorsement of project proposals related to calls closing in January and May. In addition, assistance and feedback was given to various entities regarding clarification letters required by the Project Selection Committee. Meetings with entities whose projects have been selected for EU funding were held on a monthly basis to monitor project progress, deal with emerging issues and facilitate programme management. The OPI also organised two Ministerial Steering Committee meetings for the Tourism Projects in line with local and EU Cohesion Policy procedures.

In addition, the OPI exercises a line ministry function in regard to the payment process relating to projects approved for implementation by non-governmental organisations and local councils.

This function includes processing payments (Invoice Status Certificates) on the Structural Fund Database related to the approved ESF/ERDF projects implemented by OPM line departments/entities, NGOs and

local councils, as well as the Technical Assistance programmes of PPCD. In total, 515 payments were checked, processed through the SFD system and sent to Treasury during 2009.

Six of ten proposals submitted by OPM departments/entities in response to the January and May 2009 calls were selected for EU Funding. Two were not selected while two other proposals are awaiting a decision by the Managing Authority. The approved projects are:

CPRT

ESF 4.10 Developing Core Skills in the Public Service
 ESF 4.98 Strengthening Information Management Units and other Functions through Special Training

MCESD

ESF 4.94 Closer to Europe

MEPA

ERDF 156 Developing National Environmental Monitoring Infrastructure and Capacity

MEU

ESF 4.80 Developing the Maltese Public Sector Capacity for Better Regulation

MPO

ESF 4.97 Employee Support Programme for the Public Sector

During 2009, the EU Fund Managers attended information and training sessions on the Structural Funds Database, EU funding opportunities, procurement and tendering procedures, Territorial Programmes, Project Progress Reports and delivered a presentation on Invoice Status Certificates to NGOs and local councils.

Customer Care Function

The OPI Directorate handles the Customer Care issues that fall under the remit of the Office of the Prime Minister. Complaints/requests are received both from the local general public as well as from abroad, mostly through the OPM website or by e-mail. 441 customer care requests, including 96 from foreigners, were processed during 2009. All were settled within 10 days or passed to the Prime Minister's Secretariat upon receipt for appropriate action.

A further 35 requests were received through the computerised Customer Care system, *servizz.gov*. Of these, 33 were settled within one day and the other two within 10 days.

OPM Website

This Directorate is responsible for the content management of the 'Office of the Prime Minister' section of the website. During the last year, the relevant information was inputted onto the new website and corrections communicated to the developers for amendment.

MARIE-LOURDES GRECH

Director (Operations and Programme Implementation)

Tourism and Sustainable Development Unit

LEGISLATIVE AND NON-LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS RELATED TO TOURISM

Transposition of the Service Directive (2006/123/EC) by December 2009

The process entailed Member States to examine whether their legal system makes access to a service activity or the exercise of it subject to compliance with any of the following non-discriminatory requirements:

- quantitative or territorial restrictions, in particular in the form of limits fixed according to population or of a minimum geographical distance between providers;
- an obligation on a provider to take a specific legal form;
- requirements which relate to the shareholding of a company;
- requirements, other than those concerning matters covered by Directive 2005/36/EC or provided for in other Community instruments, which reserve access to the service activity in question to particular providers by virtue of the specific nature of the activity;
- a ban on having more than one establishment in the territory of the same State;
- requirements fixing a minimum number of employees;
- fixed minimum and/or maximum tariffs with which the provider must comply;
- an obligation on the provider to supply other specific services jointly with his service.

Member States to verify that the requirements referred to satisfy the following conditions:

- non-discrimination: requirements must be neither directly nor indirectly discriminatory according to nationality nor, with regard to companies, according to the location of the registered office;
- necessity: requirements must be justified by an overriding reason relating to the public interest;
- proportionality: requirements must be suitable for securing the attainment of the objective pursued; they must not go beyond what is necessary to attain that objective and it must not be possible to replace those requirements with other, less restrictive measures which attain the same result.

Member States have to notify the Commission of any new laws, regulations or administrative provisions which set requirements as referred to in paragraph 6, together with the reasons for those requirements. The Commission shall communicate the provisions concerned to the other Member States. Such notification shall not prevent Member States from adopting the provisions in question.

Within a period of three months from the date of receipt of the notification, the Commission shall examine the compatibility of any new requirements with Community law and, where appropriate, shall adopt a decision requesting the Member State in question to refrain from adopting them or to abolish them.

Within the tourism context, TSDU and MTA were representatives on the National Services Transposition Working Group. The work undertaken involved:

- identification of schemes/service activities regulated by the MTA;
- screening of schemes to ensure compliance;
- evaluation of schemes in accordance with the SD provisions;
- identification of stakeholders that were to be effected by the implementation of the directive;
- decisions and amendments undertaken on schemes/applications to be fully compliant;

- simplification of procedures and formalities applicable to the access to a service activity and the provision of information and assistance to providers and the simplification of applications to complete all online procedures and formalities relating to access to a service activity;
- MTA Main Act and relevant Subsidiary Legislations (Tourism Accommodation Establishments Regulations; Holiday Premises Regulations, Catering establishments Regulations; Host family Accommodation Regulations; Travel Operators and Organised Excursion Operators Regulations) have been duly ratified so as to enable the smooth transposition of SD in the tourism law.

Review of the Timeshare Directive (94/47/EC)

Malta closely followed the proposed review of the Timeshare Directive so as to ensure that the Island's priorities in this regard are highly considered and if possible included in the review. The Directive needs to be fully transposed in Maltese Law by 23 February 2011. Together with other Member States, Malta will communicate to the Commission the text of any provisions which will be necessary to ensure a smooth transposition.

Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on Aviation Security Charges COM (2009) 217 final

Malta started to discuss the proposal of a Directive for Security Charges in May 2009. The proposal identifies the importance of aviation security charges for airports in each EU Member State and seeks to establish a common framework regulating the essential components of security charges and the way these charges are set. This common framework aims to minimize the disparities that could exist between airport managing companies and to increase transparency relating to the financing of aviation security charges in different member states.

The various ministries that have been constantly involved in establishing the consolidated Malta position in view of the scope and the applicability of these security charges include the Ministry for Infrastructure, Transport and Communications (implementing ministry), the Ministry for Justice and Home Affairs, the Tourism and Sustainable Development Unit (OPM) and the Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Investment. Further consultations will proceed during next year and the EU Commission will continue to seek political agreement between all member states for the applicability (or otherwise) or for the extent of applicability of this Directive for each respective member state.

MALTA'S PARTICIPATION IN DISCUSSIONS ON TOURISM AT AN EU LEVEL

Tourism Advisory Committee (TAC)

Malta is a member of the Tourism Advisory Committee. Several topics were discussed including the Commission's work programme for tourism-specific initiatives; Flash-Eurobarometer Survey, the study on the competitiveness of the EU tourism industry, extension of the European Destinations of Excellence network and the implementation of the forth EDEN project in the national context. The Tourism Statistics - preparatory action and the Calypso Social Programme preparatory action.

Tourism Sustainability Group (TSG)

Malta participates in the discussions of the TSG. The TSG discusses options for integrating sustainability in the Commission's and Member States' initiatives. Amongst other initiatives, discussions were held amongst the TSG Working Group and the TSG Members on the obligatory national reporting mechanisms. The proposal made by the TSG was approved by all Member States during the Tourism Advisory Committee (TAC). The three Working Groups assigned to work on the implementation of the TSG sustainability report are A - Sustainable Destinations, B - Sustainable Businesses, C - Consumers/Responsible Tourists

EU FUNDING

Grant Scheme for Sustainable Tourism Projects by Enterprises

Following approval from the Managing Authority, OPM's Tourism and Sustainable Development Unit commenced the implementation of the scheme for sustainable tourism projects by enterprises. €10 million were allocated to the scheme and calls for project proposals took place as follows:

- Call 1 – issued in February and closed in March 2009
- Call 2 – issued in October and closed in November 2009
- Call 3 – to be issued in October and will close in November 2010

An Evaluation Committee was set up, comprising of the Evaluation and Decisions Committee and a Technical Committee which was appointed for the Strategic Evaluation Phase.

Call 1, which closed at the end of March, saw the submission of 91 projects, 16 of which were late which left a total of 75 projects for evaluation. The outcome of the evaluation process for call 1 is explained in the table below.

Phase	Stage	Projects Accessed	Projects Approved	Appealed	Total Approved
1	Eligibility Criteria	75	35	20	41
2	Preliminary Evaluation	41	41	-	41
3	Strategic Evaluation	41	29	1	30

The total number of beneficiaries awarded in call 1 amounted to 30, with a total public co-financing amounting to €2,003,200.87.

The second call closed at the end of November, receiving a total of 113 applications, two of which were submitted late. The 111 applications that were submitted on time are now being evaluated for phase 1 of the evaluation process.

Whilst the evaluation process for call 2 is well underway, disbursements of call 1 are currently being processed.

EUROPEAN DESTINATIONS OF EXCELLENCE (EDEN)

In September 2009, the Malta proposal to participate once again in the EDEN project was accepted. The aim of this project is to award those less-known tourism destinations (localities) in the European Union that manage their tourism industry in a responsible and innovative way and that seek to decrease the seasonality problem.

The award is based on a yearly theme. The theme for 2010 is Aquatic Tourism. For Malta, only coastal localities that have implemented a project within the last three years are eligible to apply for the Award. During October the application form and guidelines were designed. A specific logo for this year's award was also created. Through a call advertised on the newspaper, an external consultant was engaged to assist applicants in applying for the award. The Call for submission was opened on 1 December and closes on 15 February. Information was uploaded on the TSDU website. An advert was issued on the newspapers to notify this call for submissions and also to notify possible applicants about a seminar that was held in Malta. In Gozo, one-to-one meetings were held. All eligible localities were contacted individually to inform them about the award.

One-to-one meetings are also being organised with possible applicants to discuss eligibility.

CALYPSO SOCIAL TOURISM PROJECT

This project aims at cataloguing the main (most representative) good practices as a means to encourage tourism activity particularly during the off peak season, thus generating employment opportunities when tourism demand is traditionally low. The first year will witness the:

- identification of the existing measures at European and national level allowing the exchanges of persons from the following target groups: senior citizens, young people, disabled citizens
- families facing difficult social circumstances; examining the difficulties related to such exchanges whilst proposing the most appropriate solutions
- proposing one or several mechanisms in the tourist low season enabling particular target groups (senior citizens, young people, disabled citizens and families facing difficult social circumstances) to go on holiday in other Member States/Candidate Countries on the basis of themed programmes and accommodation offers coordinated by Member States/Candidate Countries authorities (national, regional or local public authorities), on the basis of initiatives from stakeholders that include municipalities, charitable organisations, parishes, unions, social partners, cooperatives or any not-for-profit association.

MALTA'S TOURISM POLICY AND THE NATIONAL TOURISM PLAN

Malta's tourism policy had identified Malta's policies in regard to fourteen issues. Complementing these policies, a number of actions were identified to address these issues. These actions are listed in the National Tourism Plan. Each of the actions focuses on a particular aspect of the issue and is intended to make the implementation simpler to action.

While it was evident that most of these tasks are intrinsically combined with the operational and ongoing function of the Malta Tourism Authority, yet the fact they had been structured into the tourism plan for 2007-2011 gives the process of tourism management a greater sense of accountability. The National Tourism Plan was monitored on a regular basis throughout the year.

The National Tourism Policy was also recently updated so as to include Rural Tourism designated areas. The policy states that we need to ensure and encourage a better quality of life in rural areas and diversification of the rural economy through the implementation of rural tourism activities. Rural tourism should allow for the creation of an alternative source of income in the non-agricultural sector for rural dwellers. The added income for rural tourism can contribute to the revival of traditional folk art and handicrafts. It is an ideal and natural method of rural and urban economic exchange.

Two tasks mentioned in the national tourism plan relate to disseminating information on sustainable tourism and to a tourism education campaign. The TSDU organised a seminar with the Federation of Tour Operators about sustainable practices by tourism service providers. The message forthcoming from this seminar was that sustainability makes good business sense. Tourism establishments also had the opportunity to undergo a free audit by FTO against the Travelife Sustainability System. Various establishments took on this offer.

TOURISM APPRECIATION CAMPAIGN

The Tourism Campaign aims to awaken national pride through the appreciation of all that Malta has to offer, whilst highlighting the opportunities the tourism industry offers. While the campaign targets the children directly, it aims to cater for the wider public using the indirect approach. After the planning phase of 2008, 2009 saw a mixed approach incorporating both a planning phase and the initiation of a direct approach. In 2009, the creation of the brand *Apprezza* as well as the production of an advert with the aim to create more tourism awareness took place. The campaign participated in Skolasajf, the Kids on Campus programme as well as ongoing events such as participation in the European Year of Creativity and Innovation. In the last quarter of 2009, the campaign focused on the preparation of material related to Turu - the campaign mascot, the creation of a historical story book as a fun way of promoting heritage and

culture as well as the creation of a website, to set the grounds for 2010 that will focus on a more direct and interactive approach.

Eco-Gozo

The TSDU drafted the *Gozo-Tourism Policy Contribution Document* which was primarily intended to provide a guide for decision making in the field of Gozo's sustainable tourism development and was aimed at providing input to Government's policy for developing Gozo as an eco-island. The policy document was set out with the intention of proposing win-win solutions for the tourism industry, by contributing towards making Gozo an attractive ecological island whereby all development brought along is defined in terms of any intended initiatives that guard the environment. The Tourism and Sustainable Development Unit has continued to provide inputs related to the tourism strategic priorities required to complement the eco-Gozo strategy. The eco-Gozo concept and the tourism strategy for Gozo shall continue to focus on:

- the development of tourism related activities that contribute to support the principles of responsible travel and sustainable development, the generation of employment and awareness about the industry;
- initiatives to be adopted by tourism service providers to increase their competitive advantage and to promote Gozo as an eco-island through their practices, processes and through the tourism offer;
- investment which will contribute to the development of Gozo as an eco-island respecting the island's built and natural heritage and its people, generating benefits on the basis of sustainable development and eco-principles;
- initiatives which will effectively market Gozo's distinctiveness as an eco-island, focusing on particular niche markets, providing the distinct identity for the island which is required in today's competitive travel market.

ROADSHOW CONFERENCE

Sustainable Tourism- Who is Responsible?

The Federation of Tour Operators (FTO) in collaboration with the Tourism and Sustainable Development Unit organised a national conference, during January 2009, with the objective to promote sustainable tourism and to launch the Travelife Sustainability System with local tourism operators.

The Travelife Sustainability System is an industry owned tool that has been launched for Maltese tourism businesses during this two-day conference. The tool, which is fully supported by the Federation of Tour Operators, helps tourism enterprises to understand the main challenges facing sustainable tourism development and offers solutions to help tourism enterprises achieve better and more outstanding performance.

Tourism businesses in Malta were presented with the competitive opportunities which materialise through day-to-day business practices and through sustainable operability. Tourism businesses were invited to participate in these practices which are considered to strengthen the value of their existing offer both at a national and at an international level. The various opportunities offered through EU funding opportunities for the programming period (2007-2013) have also been explained. Government's commitment to support such initiatives and to enhance the integrity of a responsible operation policy have been constantly outlined and reiterated throughout this activity.

MARIE-LOUISE MANGION

Head (Tourism and Sustainable Development)

Department of Information

MEDIA RELATIONS

2,258 Press Releases were issued on behalf of the various branches of the Government, in addition to a further 325 Press Notices. All of these were uploaded on the same day on to the Department's website.

During 2009 the Department also coordinated coverage by local media on overseas visits by the Maltese authorities on no less than 11 occasions as follows:

- 19-23 Jan: Official visit by the Prime Minister to Federal Republic of Germany
- 18-21 Mar: Prime Minister at the European Council
- 17-20 Jun: Prime Minister at the European Council
- 17-19 Jun: Pontifical Audience of the President at the Vatican
- 22-27 Jun: Prime Minister's visit to Baltic States
- 25-29 Aug: State visit by the President to Qatar
- 01-02 Sep: President attending the 40th Anniversary of the Libyan Revolution
- 28-31 Oct: Prime Minister at the European Council
- 01-03 Nov: Prime Minister's Official Visit to Spain
- 09-12 Dec: Prime Minister at the European Council
- Prime Minister at the United Nations Conference on Climate Change

This coordination included coverage by a DOI photographer, and distribution of video footage to all local TV stations. The Department also coordinated media coverage for eight state/official visits to Malta as follows:

- February - Vice President of the People's Republic of China HE Xi Jinping
- April - HE Mr Ban Ki-Moon, Secretary General of the United Nations
- May - HE Mr Antonio Tajani Vice-President of the European Commission Responsible for Transport
- June - Mr Vladimir Špidla, European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities
- October - President of Bulgaria HE Mr Georgi Paravanov
- October - HE Mr Kamallesh Sharma Commonwealth Secretary General and Mrs Sharma
- October - HE Mr Donald Tusk, Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland
- November - His Majesty King Juan Carlos I, King of Spain

PHOTOGRAPHY

The photography service given to the media and the general public was strengthened by the acquisition of six new camera bodies, which are considered to be among the best for professional photography. Among the benefits gained through this exercise, we find the ability to take flashless photos even in low light conditions such as St John's Co-Cathedral. Media were requested to give credit to the Department and the individual photographer when using these pictures on their publications and this served as an added motivation for the Department's photographers. The DOI photos daily find themselves on the pages of national newspapers, with a large number also ending up on the front pages of the same newspapers, sometimes even being chosen by editors over the photos taken by the newspapers' staff photographers.

This Unit covered 2,606 events through its cameras, besides providing additional stock photography as required by various departments and ministries.

The improved service given by the Department in this regard has seen its fruit in DOI photographers being considered as being the President's official photographers, even on overseas visits.

PUBLICATIONS

2009 saw the return of the publication *Pajjiżna*. Four issues were published on an average quarterly basis on the following topics:

- Symbols of National Identity
- Five years of EU Accession *
- President Edward Fenech Adami
- Education

* (partly supported by EU funds through the EU Commission and the European Parliament offices in Malta)

These were distributed to all households on the Maltese Islands, and the response was extremely positive.

165 editions of the Government Gazette were published, as well as 23 Acts, 22 Bills and 383 Legal Notices.

The Unit also published a directory of local lending libraries (with part-funding coming from one advert published on the inner front cover), the official programmes and other printed material in connection with three state visits, and one Investiture (Ġieħ ir-Repubblika) programme. The Unit also supported the MCCF through the design, layout and publication of the Fine Arts Auction held in December 2009.

PARTICIPATION IN TRADE FAIR

The Department was again responsible for the Government's presence at the Malta International trade Fair. The theme was education, and a comprehensive and interactive, informative stand was drawn up which was prominently situated at the entrance to the fair. Childcare facilities were also set up during opening hours, and in combination with this event, the Department also published an informative leaflet about the Government's child care facilities around the Maltese Islands.

WEBSITE

The Department's website was kept updated with all events, and various banners were posted on to its home page including information about the AN1H1 influenza, Malta as a tourist destination, the Budget, and the restorative justice white paper.

PARTICIPATION IN NOTTE BIANCA

In November 2009, the Department participated in the Notte Bianca event held in Valletta, in collaboration with the Valletta campus of the University. Two sets of archive films were edited and produced with music and screened for the public. Over 1,200 people attended the screenings. A DVD with the two sets of films was also produced in-house and sold to the general public. 1,416 copies were sold at €5, generating revenue which more than covered all expenses involved in the production. This event also proved very popular and earned several mentions on national newspapers and TV, news, including a whole centre spread on The Times devoted specifically to it.

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ELECTIONS

The Department was also responsible, in close collaboration with the Electoral Commission, for the media coordination involved in the European Parliament elections. The press centre was set up and administered by the Department, and the media and the public were kept constantly adjourned of developments through press releases and the Department's website.

MARTIN BUGELLI

Director General (Information, Local Government and Public Consultation)

Government Printing Press

During 2009, the Government Printing Press continued to provide an efficient printing service to ministries, government departments and other agencies. All demands were met even though there were various instances where the press was given very short lead times.

PRINTING OF GOVERNMENT GAZETTE AND SUPPLEMENTS

	Issues	Pages		Issues	Pages
Government Gazette	167	15,316	Legal Notices	383	5,162
Bills	24	858	KLBL (Bye Laws)	5	38
Acts	23	1,004			

All supplements are published together with the Government Gazette which is our main publication. Apart from the twice weekly (Tuesdays and Fridays) publications, other extraordinary editions of the Gazette are printed according to exigencies.

OTHER JOBS UNDERTAKEN DURING THE YEAR

- Electoral Registers for General, Local Council and European Parliament Elections (April & October 2009)
- Ballot papers and other related material for June 2009 Euro Parliament and Local Council Elections
- Annual Reports of various departments including Parliamentary Standing Committee, Ombudsman, House of Representative, Auditor General, etc
- Printing of mail shots for the Ministry of Finance, Office of the Prime Minister and DOI (*Pajjižna*)
- NSO statistical publications and questionnaires
- Education Department books for primary and secondary schools
- Past papers for Junior Lyceum Entrance Exams, etc
- Budget Publications (Financial Estimates, Budget Speech, Economic Survey)
- Pre-Budget Document
- All printing in connection with Notte Bianca and L-Istrina 2009

EURO PARLIAMENT/LOCAL COUNCIL ELECTIONS (JUNE 2009)

Euro Parliament/Local Councils Elections were held during the month of June. The Government Printing Press undertook all the printing requirements connected with these elections. The preparations start early with the printing of all the stationery requested by Electoral Office and Counting Hall, followed by the printing, counting and sealing of the Ballot Papers. Voluminous extraordinary Government Gazettes were published re the Voting Document accounts. The Election Results were published in two extraordinary editions of the Government Gazette.

BUDGET 2009

The usual publications in connection with the presentation of the Budget, i.e. the Financial Estimates, Economic Survey, Budget Speech and *Diskors tal-Budget* were delivered on time with very tight schedule. VAT related publication (impact of Reduced VAT Rate) was printed and presented with the Budget. The Pre-Budget Document (Growth, Jobs and Social Cohesion) was printed during the month of August.

ADMINISTRATION

- A call for the recruitment of three printers was issued in September, trade tests were held during the month of November and Printers were appointed on 20 December.
- Ongoing stock-taking exercises of existing paper in store are done to avoid unnecessary expenditure on idle and slow-moving stock.
- Maintenance of the premises, including sub-station, water pumps, generator and industrial air-conditioners.
- During 2009, the Printing Press successfully continued to reduce arrears of revenue due to the GPP by other government departments and entities.

ADDITIONAL MACHINERY

- A new laminating machine was installed in the Finishing Section, an investment of €40,000. Training of staff was carried out at the Printing Press.
- A digital printer was installed in the Typesetting Section and is currently being used for short runs *print on demand* work.

ENVIRONMENT

- There is ongoing promotion of the use of recycled/ecological paper to government departments. As of January 2009, the Government Gazette and Supplements are being printed on recycled paper.
- Paper waste is being separated at the Press and sent for recycling.
- Used aluminium printing plates are being sold by tender to be recycled.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- Complete maintenance of the fire-fighting equipment was carried out during 2009.
- Increased the number of battery operated palletisers to minimise the risk of back injuries.

STATISTICS

Tenders Awarded in 2009					
Description	Advert No.	Supplier	Description	Advert No.	Supplier
Recycled Paper	1/2009	Fortuna Enterprises Ltd	NCR Paper	4B/2009	Arrowswift Contacts Ltd
Art Paper	2/2009	Fortuna Enterprises Ltd	Offset Cartridge Paper	5/2009	Kasco Ltd
Bristol Board and Thick Paper	3/2009	Arrowswift Contacts Ltd and Kasco Ltd	Colour Digital Printer	6/2009	Repro House
Art Paper	4/2009	Kasco Ltd	Laminating Machine	7/2009	Sado Co Ltd

Production Report by Category - 2009					
Category	Jobs Delivered	Total (€)	Category	Jobs Delivered	Total (€)
Letterheads A4	82	20,781	Government Gazette	161	667,223
Complimentary Slips	53	3,250	Act	21	39,598
Visiting Cards	249	18,002	Legal Notices	269	255,760
File Covers	134	41,061	Bill	23	46,353
Forms	734	709,480	LCBL	3	1,769
Envelopes	69	9,741	Publications Extra	41	1,059
Invitations	77	8,915	Past Papers	48	5,032
Books (16pp +)	123	130,180	School Books	39	8,147
Multiple sets	78	50,085	Miscellaneous	81	18,818
Magazines	7	47,246	Outwork	5	938
Leaflets/Brochures	56	47,680	Blank Paper	43	2,764
Posters	7	5,232	Booklets (-16pp)	149	113,980
Vouchers/Tickets	2	355	Total	2554	2,253,449

Jobs listed above were ordered by 153 different departments, schools and other entities.

CARMELO R SAMMUT
 Director (Government Printing Press)

Department for Local Government

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM

Department's Involvement in the Reform Process

The Department for Local Government's (DLG) major assignment during 2009 was its active input in the implementation of the Local Government Reform 2009. The DLG's input in the reform process included:

- input in the setting up of the Local Government Reform Unit that was entrusted to carry out attendance at all consultation meetings and keeping of minutes as well as drawing up the report of all the proposals and recommendations received;
- forwarding proposals for legal amendments and new legislation, new policies and practices in line with the local government reform report;
- the formulation and publication of a *Code of Good Practices for Local Government*, the *Malta Policy for Local Governance* and the formulation of a *Local and Regional Protocol for Elected Representatives* that is still in the consultation stage with the main stakeholders;
- assistance in drawing up the final Reform Report, including the drawing up of maps of new Communities;
- drafting of new and amendment legislation to reflect the local government reform proposals, including the drafting of the Act to amend the Local Councils Act (Act XVI of 2009) and other subsidiary legislation such as Twinning Regulations, Board of Petitions Regulations and Tender Regulations;
- liaison with the Centre of Expertise of the Council of Europe for the setting up of a Working Group to discuss, design and implement Performance Indicators to measure the efficient, economic and effective performance of Local Councils in Malta and Gozo.

New Grant Schemes

The Local Government Reform, which was initiated in May 2009, led to two important documents to put into effect the reform proposals: (a) the reform report titled *Biex il-Kunsill Jagħtik l-Aqwa Servizz* that includes over 120 measures for implementation; and (b) the enactment of the Act to Amend the Local Councils Act (Act No XVI of 2009) that introduced 50 new legislative amendments. By year, approx 75% of the proposals in the reform document and 90% of the legislative amendments were put into force.

During the year, 11 earmarked Fund Schemes for Local Councils were launched. The Department was involved in the preparation, adjudication (through an official on the Adjudication Board) and payment of these schemes to the successful councils. The schemes and the amounts allocated to each scheme are indicated in the table below:

<i>Premju Lokalitajiet Indaf</i>	€ 200,000
Special Funds for Localities with Special Needs	€ 565,000
Special Funds Scheme	€ 250,000
EU Co-Financing Fund Scheme	€ 303,000
Sustainable Development Strategy Study Scheme	€ 75,000
Accessibility Scheme	€ 155,000
Sport Initiatives Scheme	€ 60,000
Energy Saving Initiatives Scheme	€ 315,000
Cultural Activities Scheme	€ 141,500
Local Enterprise u Green Challenge Awards	€ 200,000
Total	€2,264,500

NEW LOCAL GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES AND POLICIES

Extension of Local Councils' Working Days

In line with the citizens' wishes as expressed during the local government reform consultation process, by means of a circular issued in July 2009, the general public was informed that as of 17 October 2009, all local council administrative offices in Malta and Gozo were to open on Saturdays from 8.00 am to 11.30 am. This measure was introduced so that the public could lodge complaints, apply for permits or pay contravention fines or make other payments. It was also announced that this initiative was also aimed as a measure for local councils to deliver the best service to their citizens. From on-the-spot checks carried out by DLG officials on different days, it was ascertained that all councils observed this new directive.

Bank Guarantees with respect to Works

A circular issued to all councils in mid-2009 made reference to the regulations on the environmental management and construction sites, whereby councils were instructed not to demand any additional bank guarantee from developers who had obtained a permit for development from the Malta Environment and Planning Authority. The bank guarantee drawn up in favour of MEPA was sufficient to ensure the reinstatement of the road after the works were concluded, and MEPA was obliged to consult the council to ensure that the works were satisfactorily carried out before the bank guarantee could be lifted. If such reinstatement works are not satisfactorily carried out, these works would be carried out either by MEPA or the council at the expense of the developer.

New Organic Waste Tender Document

In April 2009, following long and thorough discussions held between all the stakeholders, a new tender document for the collection and disposal of municipal organic waste was finalised. All councils were informed to issue this new tender document when their current contract expired. The primary aim of this new document was to introduce new specifications with the aim of increasing existing standards and ensure a more efficient service to local citizens. The new contract document introduces new concepts, such as new adjudication procedure, the obligation of a work plan, and standards with respect to refuse collection vehicles.

Code of Good Practices for Local Government

In June 2009, also in line with one of the proposals for the local government proposals, a *Code of Good Practices for Local Government* was published and distributed to all Councillors. This code is aimed as guidelines to all Councillors by providing examples of good practice with respect to local governance. The code was published following consultations with various stakeholders as well as perusal of the Aberdeen Agenda (Commonwealth Local Government Forum) and other publications by the Council of Europe. The code, primarily aimed at assisting Councillors to provide the best service, includes guidelines with respect to: transparency in all spheres of operation, inclusivity of all spheres of society, integration and co-operation between council members, ethical behaviour, accountable behaviour and the importance that all council members be competent and innovative in their approach.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE

Local Council Financing

Central government allocation to local councils for financial year 2009/2010 was of €28.01 million, that signifies an actual increase of € 4.04 million over the previous financial year. As indicated earlier, a total of €2.26 million were also allocated under various grant schemes. The total direct financial allocation to local councils for the year under review, therefore, amounted to € 30.27 million.

Government also assists councils through the secondment of government employees with councils. During 2009, a total of 147 IPSL (former Dockyard) workers were assigned to councils in Malta, whereas an additional 20 Government employees were assigned with Gozo councils. Another 20 employees from Resources and Rural Affairs employees were also assigned with local councils. The total number of government employees assigned to local councils, thus, amounts to 187. Since the salaries and wages of these workers are borne by central government, this deployment of workers scheme effectively means that councils are saving a total of approximately €2.8 million in wages. Of these, the Department for Local Government is responsible for the salaries of all the 20 employees assigned with Gozo councils and part of the salaries of the IPSL workers.

The Department also provides assistance to the Local Councils Association (LCA) and to the Association of Local Council Executive Secretaries (ASKLM) as part of government's commitment to assist both associations. During 2009, the LCA was given an annual financial allocation of €75,000 whereas the ASKLM was given an annual financial allocation of €9,318.

The table below illustrates central government's direct financial allocation to local councils since the setting up of local councils in 1994.

Central Government's Financial Allocation to Local Councils: 1994 – 2010				
<i>Financial Year</i>	<i>Direct Financial Allocation (Funding Formula)</i>		<i>Funds for special Needs/Grant Schemes</i>	
	Lm mill.	€ mill.	Lm mill.	€ mill.
1994-1995	4.5	10.48	0.3	0.70
1995-1996	6.3	14.68	1.3	3.03
1996-1997	6.25	14.56	2.5	5.82
1997-1998	8.75	20.38	2.5	5.82
1998-1999	5.831	13.58	2.5	5.82
1999-2000	6.5	15.14	2.5	5.82
2000-2001	9.66	22.50	---	---
2001-2002	10.24	23.85	---	---
2002-2003	10.54	24.55	---	---
2003-2004	10.70	24.92	---	---
2004-2005	10.686	24.89	---	---
2005-2006	10.200	23.75	---	---
2006-2007	10.250	23.88	---	---
2007-2008	10.270	23.92	---	---
2008-2009	---	26.97	---	---
2009-2010	---	27.01	---	1.59
2010		30.01	---	2.26
Total		365.07 mill.		30.86 mill.
Total Funds to Local Councils		(1994-2010)		395.93 mill.

HUMAN RESOURCES – MAJOR ACTIVITIES

Personal Development of Council Members, Executive Secretaries and Staff

An important local government reform initiative was the assignment of a new function to the DLG; that of offering training and personal development activities to council members, Executive Secretaries and staff. This new departmental objective has now been added to the already existing three objectives, namely: (i) to provide co-ordination with ministries, departments and other government entities that directly or indirectly affect the functions and operations of local government; (ii) to provide guidance to local councils for uniformity of application as well as to facilitate their efficient and effective functioning; and (iii) to supervise councils' functions and operations to ensure that they operate within the framework of the law and approved policies and procedures.

Training for Local Councillors

Following the election of new Councillors in June 2009, a training programme was organised by the DLG for the newly elected Councillors. The course was designed in a way to incorporate both knowledge of legislation, regulations and procedures, as well as interpersonal skills. A total of 68 Councillors from Malta and Gozo attended this training programme. The course was structured as follows:

- Module 1 - Local Councils Act (Chapter 363, Laws of Malta), the Standing Orders and Bye-Laws
- Module 2 - Financial Regulations, the Role of the Auditor General vis-à-vis local government
- Module 3 - Principles of Local Government, the Role of Council Member, the Role of the Executive Secretary
- Module 4 - Teamwork, Leadership Skills

During 2009, and after having identified the need to give additional training to the council political leaders, the DLG also organised in conjunction with the Staff Development Organisation a series of workshops for Mayors and Deputy Mayors on *Managing with Leadership*. A total of 37 Mayors and Deputy Mayors attended this training programme.

Training for Local Council Executive Secretaries

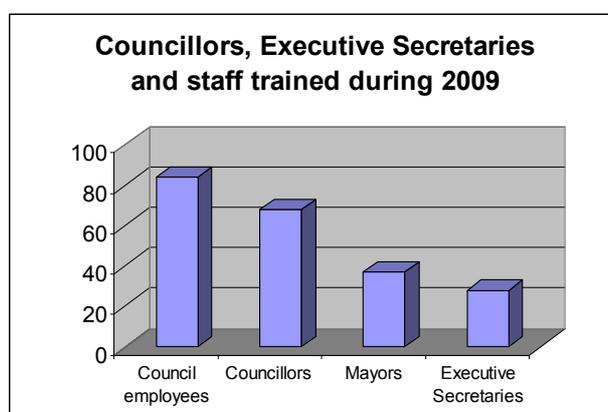
During the same year, the *Managing with Leadership* programme was also organised for Executive Secretaries. A total of 28 Council Executive Secretaries attended this training programme.

Training for Local Council Employees

In 2009, the second series of training on *Front Office Skills* and *Customer Relations* was organised to council front office staff. This programme was organised jointly with the Staff Development Organisation and was attended by 84 council employees.

Training for Youths Participating in Youth Local Councils

The DLG collaborated closely with the National Youth Council in the training programme for youths who engaged to participate in Youth Local Councils. An intensive training programme was organised for the participating youths that incorporated subjects such as the Youth Local Council Project, experiences of a Mayor, an Executive Secretary and a Councillor as well as the Local Councils Act. The latter was presented by the Director (Local Government) and this generated a lot of interest and discussion among the participating youths who are deemed as potential future Mayors and Councillors.



Seminar on Local Councillors on the Guardianship Deeds

The Parliamentary Secretariat for Public Dialogue and Information in conjunction with the DLG organised a half day seminar for Local Councillors on the implications for local councils of the Guardianship Deeds legislation and procedure. The seminar was addressed by HE Dr Ugo Mifsud Bonnici; Parliamentary Secretary Chris Said; the President of the Local Councils Association; the Director Local Government; the Superintendent of Heritage; and senior officials from the Government Property Division. Councillors whose remit included local heritage attended this highly informative and important seminar.

LOCAL DEVOLUTION ACTIVITIES

Delegation of Administration of Public Property

During 2009, the administration of further government property was delegated to nine councils. These were:

- to Xghajra Local Council of two sites to be developed into a Sport Centre and a Recreational Centre
- to San Ġiljan Local Council of 2 sites to be developed into a recreational centre comprising a 5-a-side football pitch
- to Munxar Local Council of an extension to an already devolved site for the development of a playing field
- to Sannat Local Council of a site to be developed into a playing field and botanical gardens
- to Gharb Local Council of part of the government school to be used as council administrative offices
- to Rabat (Gozo) Local Council of a playing field to be developed into a recreational centre
- to Kirkop Local Council of a site to be developed into a Primary Health Care Centre, NGOs Conference Hall, Archives and annex to the Social Security offices
- to Mellieħa Local Council of a Defence Post to be restored and used as a tourist attraction
- to Żurrieq Local Council of site to be developed into a centre to provide legal, social and tourist services.

Devolution of Branch and Regional Libraries

The year under review also saw the additional delegation of administration of two branch and one regional library. Marsaxlokk and Kirkop were given the administration of the Branch Library within their localities, whereas the Paola Local Council assumed responsibility of the Regional Library within its locality. In addition, three councils took the initiative to set up a Branch library within premises owned or leased to them. These were the Ta' Xbiex, Msida and Xghajra Local Councils. The total number of local councils administering a Branch or Regional Library amounts to 53.

LOCAL ENFORCEMENT

Local Enforcement System (LES)

All the 68 local councils in Malta and Gozo now form part of the local enforcement system (LES). The DLG is responsible to oversee that the system works as flawlessly as possible. As part of its oversight, the department offers a customer care service with respect to LES issues. As part of the local government reform process, the LES system is also under review.

An online payment service of contraventions is also available on the following webpage <http://www.gov.mt/frame.asp?l=1&url=http://www.les.gov.mt>

Board of Petitions

The Board of Petitions, whose Registry is manned by DLG officials, was set up in January 2006 and had, till the end of 2009, received 53,813 petitions. During 2009, a total of 18,608 petitions were received, that is an average of 360 petitions per week. At the end of 2009, the situation was the following: 9,204 (49.5%)

petitions were accepted, 869 (4.5%) were partially accepted, 4,725 (25.4%) were refused, 16 (0.2%) abstained, 288 (1.6) were cancelled, 3,506 (18.8%) undecided petitions. The chart below gives a graphic illustration of this data.

MONITORING OF LOCAL COUNCILS

Monitoring of Local Councils and Action Taken

The monitoring of local council functions consist of scrutiny of council decisions and documents, including financial documents, monitoring of councils that had registered a deficit in their working capital in the previous financial year, and on-site monitoring whenever deemed proper. During 2009, the Mosta Local Council was issued with a Formal Notice by the Prime Minister whereby the Council was requested to address several serious irregularities. Monitoring Officers attended council meetings, prepared reports and action taken whenever council decisions were not deemed in line with local government legislation.

During 2009, the Monitoring Unit also investigated several allegations made against councils. In one instance the case was referred to the Police for further investigation, whereas some cases were also referred to the Auditor General to refer to the Local Government Auditors to verify in their audit work.

In those cases where councils were found to have made irregular payments, corrective measures from the councils concerned were requested, and in other instances financial deductions were effected from Government's subvention. The total amount of moneys withheld from 10 erring councils during 2009 was of €14,740.

LOCAL COUNCIL APPRAISAL

Efficiency Reports

Updating of local Councils Asset Inventory

The Department's Field Services Unit carried out field surveys with respect to updating the local government assets in 14 localities. These included the update of verges within six localities (Marsaskala, Marsaxlokk, Mellieħa, Mgarr, Mosta, Mqabba), and traffic signs and markings in eight localities (Żejtun, Kirkop, Kalkara, Iklin, Lija, Gharghur, Gżira, San Pawl il-Baħar).

LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEGISLATION

Legal Notices

During 2009, DLG was responsible for the preparation, vetting and publication of eleven legal notices concerning local government. These legal notices regulate: the Petitions Regulations requesting that petitions can only be made within one year from receipt of the notice of contravention, the regulations regarding activities requiring permit from councils with respect to certain exemptions from payment, new Twinning Regulations, the increase of local council executive members from six to nine and the inclusion of the regional concept, amendments to the Appeals Board from decisions taken by councils with respect to tenders, and the coming into force of provisions in the Act to Amend the Local Councils Act.

Approval of New Bye-Laws

In 2009, five councils issued Bye-Laws following approval of the Minister and vetting from the DLG. These were: the Use of Facilities Bye-Laws by the Isla Local Council, Outdoor Activities within the locality of Mellieħa, Use of Animal-drawn Carriages (Mdina Local Council Bye-Laws), and the Control of Pigeons Bye-Laws by the Gżira and Ħamrun Local Councils.

NEW INITIATIVES

Cultural Events Scheme

As part of the measures undertaken by central government for the development of sustainable localities a fund amounting to €141,500 was allocated for the first time in 2009 to assist local councils in the implementation of cultural activities held throughout the year. This scheme was in line with Government's policies objectives, namely the Policy for Local Governance and the National Tourism Policy on the need to diversify the product offer, reduce seasonality and provide a better distribution of income within our localities.

A total of 38 applications were received (26 from local councils in Malta and 12 from Gozo councils). Three councils submitted more than one application (Birgu - 5, Qormi - 4, u Tarxien - 2). A total of 28 councils were granted financial allocation (14 councils in Malta, and 12 Gozo councils).

Clean Localities Reward

A new scheme, called *Premju Lokalitajiet Indaf* was also organised for the first time in 2009 and all local councils were invited to participate. Participating councils were also entitled to part refund of expenses for activities held together with cash prizes. The criteria for adjudication and the maximum points were clearly laid out in the circular issued to all councils. These were: (i) the general cleanliness in the locality; (ii) educational campaigns; (iii) citizen complaints; (iv) activities organised for local citizens and local organisations; (v) enforcement of littering offences; (vi) state of cleanliness in playing fields and public gardens; (vii) waste separation schemes; (viii) state of cleanliness of Bring-In-Sites; (ix) adequate and quality of litter bins; and (x) innovative ideas and other initiatives with respect to cleanliness in the locality. 30 councils participated in this scheme, and a total of €200,000 were given by way of refund of expenses and prizes.

Special Funds for Localities with Special Needs

This new scheme was issued in April 2009. These Special Funds were intended for the special needs of localities. Applicant Councils had to justify the special need in their application, attaching also a balance sheet and a statement of commitments, and Council's additional income from government's subvention. A total of 87 applications were received from 37 Councils. The original amount allocated for this scheme was of € 500,000, which was eventually increased to € 565,000 to enable a total of 20 Councils to benefit from this scheme.

Special Funds Scheme

This grant scheme was launched in August 2009. The scheme was aimed at assisting councils to carry out projects or initiatives of a particular nature, provided that such activity was within the competence of the council. The criteria for evaluation were the following: proposed projects helped in better achieving the concept of sustainable localities; projects that could be started immediately were to be given preference over others that still had to obtain the necessary permits from the competent authorities; an estimate of costs was to be submitted with the application; councils that had benefited from less than 10% increase in their financial allocation when compared to the previous year were to be given preference; and the maximum grant to be given was not to exceed 50% of the total cost of the project.

A total of 79 applications were received from 31 councils and the total amount of financial grant amounted to €250,000.

EU Co-Financing Fund Scheme

By means of a circular issued in February 2009, local councils were informed that in line with what was stated in the Budget Speech, Central Government was allocating the sum of € 303,000 to assist councils to apply for EU projects. This scheme was intended to provide financial assistance for councils with respect to the co-financing part pertaining to the council. 17 Councils and the Local Councils Association submitted a total of 21 applications.

Sustainable Development Strategy Study Scheme

This scheme was issued as part of the measures being undertaken by central government for the development of sustainable localities. Applicant councils had to submit a project proposal for a Sustainable Development Strategy study. The original amount allocated under this scheme was of € 50,000 for two projects, which was eventually increased to € 75,000 for three projects.

Accessibility Scheme

This scheme was also issued as part of the measures being undertaken by Central Government for the development of sustainable localities. An original budget of €100,000 was allocated for this scheme to assist in making local councils' premises and public spaces within localities more physically accessible to the community. The amount was eventually increased to € 155,000. 32 local councils and the Local Councils Association submitted a total of 38 applications, of which 19 were successful.

Sport Initiatives Scheme

In January 2009, the Sport Initiatives scheme was launched jointly between the Parliamentary Secretariat for Public Dialogue and Information and the Parliamentary Secretary for Youth and Sport. This initiative was part of the measures being undertaken by Central Government to increase sports participation within the local communities and in view of Central Government's strategy for the development of sustainable localities. A fund amounting to €60,000 was allocated to assist local councils in the implementation of sport initiative/s held throughout 2009. A total of 44 councils applied under this scheme.

Energy Saving Initiatives Scheme

This scheme was launched in December 2008 and adjudicated during 2009 with the aim of financially assisting councils to carry out the specific function of safeguarding the locality's rural and urban environment. The scheme was also in line with the sustainable localities concept. A total of 44 councils applied under this scheme, including a consortium made up of 15 councils. The original amount allocated for this scheme was of €180,000 which was eventually increased to €315,000.

LOCAL ENTERPRISE AND GREEN CHALLENGE AWARDS

As part of the measures undertaken by Central Government for the development of sustainable localities, a fund amounting to €200,000 was allocated for two schemes - one focusing on the awarding of initiatives undertaken within localities which during these past two years assisted and incentivised businesses within respective localities; another scheme focusing on the Local Councils Green Challenge Award for initiatives undertaken for the embellishment of the local environment.

Seventeen councils submitted their application under the Local Enterprise Award Scheme, and 24 councils submitted an application under the Green Challenge Award Scheme. Under the Local Enterprise Award Scheme, eight councils received a grant of €5,000, the semi-finalist (Birgu) received an award of €10,000 and the winning council (Mellieħa) received an award of €40,000. Under the Green Challenge Award Scheme, another eight councils were awarded the sum of €5,000, the semi-finalist council (San

Lawrenz) received an award of €10,000 and the winning council (H'Attard) was awarded €40,000. Councils were also given a trophy and the award ceremony was aired on the national television station.

Code of Good Practice for Local Government

Following consultations with key stakeholders and extensive research of local government good practice documents of other EU and Council of Europe Member States, the Department prepared a working document titled *Code of Good Practice for Local Government*. This document was further discussed with the LCA and the ASKLM and a final document was published in mid-2009. The code is aimed at assisting in achieving effective and efficient functions and operations within local councils and comprises the following principles: openness and inclusivity, integrity, accountability, ethical conduct, competence and capacity, innovation and openness to change, responsiveness, corporate governance, enhancing local democracy, adopting a management approach, sustainability and long term orientation, sound financial management, and rule of law. It also lays down recommended action, such as the adoption of a Local Strategic Plan, the adoption of a Vision for the locality, promoting values, taking informed and transparent decisions and personal development of council members and staff.

NATALINO ATTARD
Director (Local Government)

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Directorate General - Political

From a general perspective, the Directorate General focused efforts on ensuring that Malta's foreign policy objectives on bilateral (non-EU), regional and global issues were pursued, not least through active participation in the European Union's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). These efforts included the preparation of positions for interventions at the General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC), Coreper, PSC and relevant working group meetings. Inputs were provided to the formulation of EU positions both on issues relating to Malta's immediate neighbourhood, in particular North Africa and the Middle East Peace Process, and also in areas of primary international importance outside Malta's neighbourhood. Briefing sessions were conducted in the run-up to GAERC to communicate Malta's positions on the various agenda items to the diplomatic representation of other Member States in Malta.

GLOBAL ISSUES DIRECTORATE

During 2009, the Global Issues Directorate continued with its mission to enhance relations with international organisations, such as the United Nations and its agencies, the Commonwealth, the International Atomic Energy Agency, the International Organisation for Migration, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, and the Hague Convention.

It was also involved in bilateral contacts with various African countries, namely, Angola, The Gambia, Mali, South Africa and Sudan aimed at improving Malta's relations with these countries and particularly focusing on migration issues.

The Directorate coordinated the visit of the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs to New York to attend the 64th Session of the UN General Assembly in September 2009. In his address to the General Assembly, the Prime Minister proposed that this body examines the possible approaches for a review of the 1982 Law of the Sea Convention and, through its relevant bodies, to undertake appropriate consultations among its Member States to review the Convention in view of new and critical issues that emerged since its entry into force. On this occasion, Malta also proposed the drafting of a declaration on human duties and human responsibilities in view of the fact that Malta believes that human duties are intrinsic to the personality, oneness and uniqueness of the human being and are inalienable as human rights. The Directorate was also actively involved in preparing the necessary documentation in respect of the Commonwealth Foreign Ministers Meeting, held in New York in September 2009.

The Global Issues Directorate in conjunction with the Permanent Mission to the United Nations in New York was involved in the preparatory work leading to the historic visit of the United Nations Secretary-General to Malta on 21-22 April 2009.

During 2009, the Global Issues Directorate continued to deal directly with Commonwealth issues especially in view of the Commonwealth's sixtieth anniversary. Apart from coordinating the first visit to Malta by Mr Kamallesh Sharma, the Commonwealth Secretary-General, the Directorate was also actively involved in preparing the necessary documentation in respect of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, held in Trinidad and Tobago in November 2009.

Six training programmes were held under the Malta/Commonwealth Third Country Programmes in the following areas:

- Coastal Management
- IT and Diplomacy
- Insurance Management
- Banking and Finance Policies in Small States
- Competitive Strategies for Small States (in alternation)
- Freeport Operations Management
- Cyber law.

In 2009, Malta continued offering technical assistance to three Commonwealth Countries mainly Mauritius, Seychelles and Swaziland.

During the same period a number of Maltese officials participated in election observation missions held by the EU in Malawi, Lebanon, and Bolivia.

Particular attention was devoted to addressing the international aspects of irregular immigration, with the Directorate actively involved in pursuing Malta's interest in this regard within the EU and other international entities. The Directorate gave its contribution in preparation of positions on the migration section of the Stockholm Programme. It contributed towards the successful bid to host the European Asylum Support Office (EASO). Opportunities were also availed of at the HLWG on Asylum and Migration to make the case for support for the Pilot Project for internal reallocation of beneficiaries of international protection present in Malta.

During the year, 188 refugees and persons accorded humanitarian protection were resettled in the United States, 91 were resettled in France whilst another 11 were resettled in Germany.

Through the Assisted Voluntary Return Project known as the DAR project, which started in 2007 and came to an end in June 2009, a total of 171 migrants returned voluntarily to their country of origin.

As a member of the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT), in April 2009 the Directorate participated in the Workshop GICNT in Garmish, Germany.

In May 2009, Malta successfully underwent its first Universal Periodic Review, a newly established mechanism that examines in an interactive manner, the human rights track record of all UN member states once every four years, at the Human Rights Council. Throughout the entire process spanning almost one year, the Directorate interacted with various Ministries, civil society and other entities with a view to coordinating and preparing the various reports for the UPR exercise.

In line with Malta's development policy, the Directorate coordinated the process leading to the part financing of nine projects by local voluntary organisations. These nine projects concern the setting up of equipment for a school in Tanzania; the construction of a nursery school, internet centre and setting up of a community centre in Kenya; the construction of a housing project and water desalination equipment in Ethiopia; the construction of a nursery school in Tanzania; financing a Red Cross logistic project in Swaziland; construction of two sites as playing grounds, one in South Africa and the other one in Peru. The Directorate made its contributions to two other projects in the Occupied Palestinian Territories which consists of upgrading of IT equipment and renovation of hospital facilities in the X Ray Department. Other financial disbursements included a UNICEF contribution; funding of technical assistance to the Seychelles; pledging of funds for a donors conference on Somalia; funds for the reconstruction of Gaza and training of Palestinian police personnel.

The Directorate and two local non-governmental organisations coordinated Malta's participation in the European Development Days held in Stockholm on 22 -24 October.

Officials from the Development Unit regularly attended five Working Groups meetings held in Brussels. The five Working Groups attended are the following: HAC (Humanitarian Aid Committee), EU-Africa MDG Partnerships, EDF (European Development Fund), DCI (Development Cooperation Instruments) and EPA (Economic Partnership Agreements).

Officials from the Directorate regularly attended eleven CFSP Working Groups meetings held in Brussels, apart from participating in various international meetings. The eleven Working Groups attended by this Directorate are the following: CONUN (United Nations), CODUN (Disarmament), CONOP (Non-Proliferation), COMAR (Law of the Sea), COHOM (Human Rights), COARM (Arms Control), COAFR (Africa), COJUR (Public International Law), COJUR/ICC (Jurists Working Group dealing with the International Criminal Court), COTER (Terrorism) and the High Level Working Group on Asylum and Migration. The Directorate also covers the EU-Africa Partnerships on Migration, Mobility and Employment (MME) as well as on the Millennium Development Goals.

The following treaties were signed/ratified by Malta during 2009:

Signed	
25 November	Agreement between the Government of Malta and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
Ratified	
24 September	United Nations Convention on Cluster Munitions

EXTERNAL RELATIONS AND MEDITERRANEAN AFFAIRS DIRECTORATE

Malta's relations with non-European countries and its position on a number of international political issues have been coordinated by the Directorate. Such positions were also expressed, where appropriate, at the EU level within the relevant Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) structures during the Czech and Swedish Presidencies of the EU.

Directorate Officers participated in Capitals-formation meetings of the following Working Groups: COMAG (Mashrek/Maghreb), COMEM (Middle East and Gulf), COMEP (Middle East Peace Process), COEST (Easter Europe), COASI (Asia), COTRA (Transatlantic – USA & Canada) and COLAT (Latin America), COMED (Mediterranean Affairs) contributing to common positions and reflecting Malta's national interests and political realities.

Active participation in regional fora and initiatives of direct relevance to the Mediterranean region, particularly within the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), the European Neighbourhood Policy and the Western Mediterranean (5+5) Dialogue was ensured together with timely contributions to the largely thematic approach of the Mediterranean agenda adopted by these fora. With a view to ascertain Malta's role in the UfM project, the Directorate participated in the regular UfM Senior Officials meetings and was involved in the drafting of the UfM Secretariat Statutes and the allocation of Deputy Secretaries-General seats.

Malta continued to work for a structured political dialogue between the EU and the League of Arab States, as highlighted in the Malta Communiqué of February 2008. Following a joint letter from European Commissioner for External Relations and Neighbourhood Policy Benita Ferrero Waldner and LAS Secretary General Amre Moussa to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs in November 2008, the EC-LAS Liaison office opened in Malta on 14 October 2009.

In consonance with the Ministry's strategic objective of strengthening bilateral relations, particularly with neighbouring countries, the Directorate continued to actively nurture Malta's external relations on a wider bilateral level while ensuring focus on matters of direct relevance and importance to Malta's policies.

The Directorate was involved in the coordination of a number of State Visits, both incoming and outgoing. Preparations were made for the visit to Malta by HE Xi Jinping, the Vice President of the People's Republic of China in January as well as the State visit of Former President Dr Edward Fenech Adami to Australia in late February 2009.

In August, the Directorate was very actively involved in the organisation of the first State Visit by HE President George Abela who was also accompanied by a sizeable Maltese business delegation. Six bilateral agreements were signed during this visit.

In September, arrangements were made in connection with the ceremonial visit to Libya by HE The President, on the occasion of the 40th Anniversary of the Great Al-Fatah Revolution in September.

Throughout the course of the year, the Directorate was involved in the compilation of the necessary documentation and briefing material for visits and talks at Ministerial level. These high-level visits also reflect the enhanced political profile the Ministry is seeking to carve in its ongoing diplomatic performance, objectively also to reap economic benefits therefrom.

Preparations for the official visit by HE Mourad Medelci, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Algeria in February, the visit by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs to Libya in May, as well as the official visit of and the official visit to Malta of HE Suleiman Shahoumi, Secretary of the General People's Congress for Foreign Liaison in August, were carried out by the pertinent Directorate officials.

Throughout the year, the Directorate also ensured a constant and coherent follow up of the Agreed Minutes of the 25th Session of the Maltese-Libyan Joint Commission, which took place in October 2008.

In keeping with an annual commitment between Malta and Tunisia, the Directorate was responsible for the convening of the 6th Session of the Maltese-Tunisian Mixed Commission in March, which saw HE Mr Abdelwaheb Abdallah, Tunisian Minister of Foreign Affairs, heading a strong delegation of businessmen as well as public officials. In the months that followed, the Directorate has also been actively pursuing the implementation of the Agreed Minutes signed during the Mixed Commission.

The Middle East region continued to feature as a prominent component of the Directorate's work. The Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Affairs paid visits to Lebanon, Syria and Jordan in April, during which a number of agreements were also finalised. The Directorate was also closely involved in the preparations leading to the official opening of Malta's diplomatic representations in Tel Aviv and Ramallah during a visit to Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories in June. Among the incoming visits from the Middle East region, the Directorate was involved in were those by Palestinian Deputy Foreign Minister Hasan Soboh and Palestinian National Economy Minister Bassim Khoury.

Contributing to the resolution of the long-standing Middle East conflict remained a priority, particularly through effective participation in the pertinent EU structures and other international fora. The Directorate followed up and implemented the pledge made by Malta at the Conference on Palestinian Rule of Law in June 2008, where the Government of Malta had made an offer for Palestinian police officers to receive training in the different divisions of the Malta Police Forces. Three Palestinian police officers spent one month in Malta receiving such training. Moreover, the Directorate actively pursued its efforts towards the preparation of a training course, funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, on the Restoration of Cultural Heritage due to be held during 2010 in the Palestinian territories in conjunction with Heritage Malta. The granting of Official Development Assistance to two institutions in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, namely Bethlehem University and St Louis Hospital was also coordinated by pertinent officials. Contributions were also made by Malta towards the Reconstruction of Gaza within the framework of Malta's participation at an international conference to this end that was held in early March in Sharm El Sheik.

The Directorate was also involved in laying the ground for, and ensuring the finalisation of other contributions made by Malta to Afghanistan, Burma, China and Georgia in different periods of the year.

In close cooperation with the Maltese Embassy in Beijing and the Ministry of Finance, Economy and Investment, the Directorate was actively involved in the preparations for the 8th Session of the Sino-Maltese Commission which took place in late June 2009. The Chinese delegation was headed by HE Jiang Zengwei, Vice Minister of Commerce of the People's Republic of China. This occasion marked another landmark in the strengthening of economic and political ties between the two countries. On this occasion four agreements were also signed.

The June visit to Malta by the Hon Mr Stephen Smith, the Australian Minister of Foreign Affairs to Malta was also followed by pertinent Directorate officials. During this visit, Minister Smith discussed salient issues in the bilateral relationship with the Deputy Prime Minister, as well as the development of Australia-EU relations and the possibilities for enhanced regional cooperation.

The visit to Russia by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs in November, was particularly important given it was the first such visit by a Maltese Foreign Minister over the past twenty years. As part of the official visit in Moscow, the Deputy Prime Minister officially inaugurated the Maltese Consulate in Moscow.

The Directorate was involved in the preparation and participation by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Second Forum of the Alliance of Civilisations that was held in Istanbul, Turkey in April 2009. With the aim of furthering the aims of the Alliance on a local level, the Directorate pursued its efforts towards the compilation of Malta's first National Strategy for Inter-Cultural Dialogue.

The request made by the Parliamentary Assembly for the Mediterranean (PAM) for Observer Status within the United Nations, through a joint submission by Malta and France was also followed closely by this Directorate. PAM was in fact granted Observer Status and will now be able to participate in the sessions and the work of the United Nations' General Assembly as an Observer.

Progress registered in connection with the US Resettlement Program concerning refugees was another issue which the Directorate continued to follow up closely. The total number of refugees who left for the United States has reached the figure of 391 by the end of 2009.

Towards the end of the year, the Directorate intensified its cooperation with Malta's High Commission in India in view of the visit to New Delhi and Chennai by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs in January 2010.

During the course of the year, the Directorate coordinated the negotiation and conclusion of a number of bilateral agreements with countries falling under its responsibility:

State	Date	Agreement
China	22 February 2009	Agreement on the Promotion and Protection of Investments Agreement on combating Transnational Crime Agreement on Mutual Jurisdiction Assistance in Criminal Matters Programme of cultural Exchanges for the period 2009-2012 Agreement between the University of Malta and the Confucius Institute on the Establishment of the Confucius Institute at the University of Malta Exchange of Notes on the Grant of 5 RMB to the Maltese Government
Georgia	23 October 2009	Agreement on the Avoidance of Double Taxation
Jordan	16 April 2009	Convention for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with Respect to Taxes on Income
Lebanon	16 April 2009	MoU on Bilateral Consultations Between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Malta and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lebanon

		Protocol amending the Convention between the Republic of Malta and the Republic of Lebanon for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with respect to Taxes on Income
Libya	18 March 2009	MoU between the Armed Forces of Malta and the Libyan in the fields of Maritime Transport and Ports Administration in the field of Search and Rescue
Singapore	20 November 2009	Protocol Amending the Double Taxation Agreement
Syria	14 April 2009	MoU on Bilateral Consultations Between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Malta and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Syrian Arab Republic
Qatar	26 August 2009	Air Services Agreement Agreement on the Avoidance of Double Taxation Convention Agreement on Joint Cooperation and Exchange of News Memorandum of Understanding in the Field of Sport Memorandum of Understanding on Bilateral Consultations Agreement for Cooperation in the Legal Field
Tunisia	25 March 2009	Agreement for Cooperation, in the areas of further and higher education, scientific research and technology
Uzbekistan	2 July 2009	Agreement on Cooperation in the sphere of Law Enforcement

JOHN INGUANEZ
Director General (Political)

Directorate General – European and Economic Affairs

European matters continued to be the primary objective of the Directorate General's work throughout 2009 in line with the Government's policy of making a success of European Union membership and on what full membership can give, as added value, to Malta and its citizens. The Directorate General's efforts and initiatives within the European fora took account of Malta's particular interest and requirements as well as ensuring that matters of national interest are kept on the EU Agenda.

Officials from the Directorate General actively participated in a number of Council formation meetings with the Director General being involved in the pre-General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) briefing sessions held at the Ministry prior to the Brussels meeting. The Director General accompanied the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs to the monthly Brussels meetings when required.

In 2009, Malta was successful in its bid to host the European Asylum Support Office (EASO). Following a concentrated effort by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Justice and Home Affairs and Malta's Missions abroad, in particular the Permanent Representation to the European Union, Malta managed to convince its European partners that it was the ideal place to host this Office. Other contenders bidding to host the EASO were Bulgaria and Cyprus.

The Directorate General was actively involved in the lobbying exercise to garner support from EU Member States which resulted in the selection of Malta to host the European Asylum Support Office (EASO).

The Directorate General monitored developments in respect of the ratification process of the Lisbon Treaty which continued to dominate the general European Affairs agenda throughout 2009. In this regard, the Directorate General formulated positions on the various institutional issues that ensued following the positive developments towards the end of the year in the ratification process of the Treaty resulting in its entry into force on 1 December 2009.

EUROPEAN AFFAIRS DIRECTORATE

During 2009, the European Affairs Directorate continued to focus its work and sustain its efforts in further promoting the bilateral relations and exchanges between Malta and the Member States of the European Union and non-EU countries from the European region, giving, as in previous years, due attention and priority mostly to those countries with which Malta has close political, economic, commercial and cultural ties, but also maintaining bilateral contacts with the other European countries that are involved in the process of European Union membership or integration.

This Directorate participated in the monthly meetings of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) Working Group of EU relations with the Western Balkans (COWEB). The Directorate also made available documentation and briefs for the monthly EU General Affairs and External Relations (GAERC) meetings, the EU Council meetings and EU Summits on the issues pertaining to the Western Balkans countries.

During this period the Directorate was also responsible for compiling and submitting relevant briefing documentation for the Office of the DPM/MFA, OPM, OPR and the Office of the Hon Speaker, consisting of country profiles for a number of Ministerial and Parliamentary level visits to Malta from the

Czech Republic, France, Germany, Iceland, Sweden, Vatican City, Finland, Italy, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Poland, Norway, Croatia and Spain, as well as in connection with a number of visits relating to presentation of credentials and farewell calls by Ambassadors accredited to Malta. In the course of 2009, Maltese Ambassadors presented their credentials to the following European region countries: Albania, Andorra, Belgium, Cyprus, France, Ireland, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Portugal, Poland, Romania, Spain, and the UK. Officials from the Directorate accompanied and assisted a number of Maltese Ambassadors during their presentation of credentials and prepared the relevant country briefs.

The Directorate coordinated matters regarding the submission of country briefs to the Office of the President in connection with the Official Visits by the former President of Malta, Dr Edward Fenech Adami, to Poland in January 2009, to Italy and the Vatican City both in March 2009, and by the President of Malta, H.E Dr George Abela, to the Vatican City and the Sovereign Military Order of Malta (SMOM) in June 2009, as well as for the incoming State Visits to Malta by the President of Bulgaria in October 2009 and by the King of Spain in November 2009.

During the period under consideration the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Malta held meetings in Malta and abroad with his European counterparts and/or Secretaries of State for European Affairs from the following countries: Croatia, Italy, France, Iceland, Finland, Serbia, Turkey, Sweden, Estonia, Slovak Republic, Hungary, Poland, Czech Republic, Luxembourg, Norway and Spain. The Directorate prepared the country briefs for all these visits.

This Directorate also coordinated matters with the OPM in the preparation of country briefs in view of the Prime Minister's official visits to Finland, Austria, Latvia, Germany, Lithuania, Sweden, and Estonia.

The Directorate, in collaboration with the Planning and Priorities Coordination Division and the Department of Information, as well as with the Malta Tourism Authority, the Embassy of Malta in Rome and the Embassy of the Italian Republic in Malta, compiled material (including data and photographs) and prepared documents covering Malta-Italy relations with particular reference to the Financial Protocols and focusing on the implementation of the Fifth (and final) Financial Protocol. This material was eventually published in a book entitled – *Malta & Italy, an enduring relationship*. The Hon. Dr Tonio Borg, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, in the presence of Hon Prof Enzo Scotti, Secretary of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Italian Republic, launched this commemorative book during a Press Conference held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Valletta on 31 October 2009.

In its efforts to strengthen the bilateral legal framework, the Directorate continued to coordinate matters with other relevant Ministries with regard to ongoing negotiations on a number of new agreements, protocols and memoranda of understanding covering wide-ranging sectors relating to avoidance of double taxation, cooperation in cultural matters, combating organised crime, police cooperation, cooperation on health matters and on maritime issues aimed to conclude, sign and/or ratify or bring into force such instruments. In consequence, the following bilateral agreements were signed and/or ratified or entered into force:

Country	Agreement and Date of signature/ratification/entry into force
Switzerland	Agreement on Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with respect to Taxes on Income – Signed on 18 December 2008; Ratified by Malta on 14 January 2009.
Switzerland	Technical Assistance Fund Agreement concerning the Framework Agreement between the Swiss Federal Council and Malta on the implementation of the Swiss-Maltese Cooperation programme to reduce economic and social disparities within an enlarged European Union. Signed 1 March 2009. Entry into force 1 March 2009.
Switzerland, Malta & Mexico	Memorandum of Understanding (re. promotion of online diplomatic training with special focus on new teaching methods) between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Malta, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the United Mexican States and the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of the Swiss Confederation. Signed and entered into force on 25 June 2009.
Ireland	Agreement on Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with respect to Taxes on Income – Signed on 14 November 2008; Ratified by Malta on 18 November 2008. Ratified by Ireland on 15 January 2009. Entry into force on 1 January 2010.

Ireland	Agreement on Cooperation in Combating Illicit Drug Trafficking, Money Laundering, Organised Crime, Trafficking in Persons, Terrorism and other serious crime – Signed on 26 February 2009, Ratified by Malta on 29 May 2009.
Montenegro	Agreement on Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with respect to Taxes on Income – Signed on 4 November 2008. Entered into force on 23 September 2009.
Czech Republic	Programme of Cooperation in the Fields of Science, Education, Culture, Youth and Sport between the Government of the Czech Republic and the Government of Malta for the years 2009-2011 – Signed on 9 December 2008. Entry into force on 1 January 2009.
Latvia	Agreement on Cooperation in Combating Terrorism, Illicit Trafficking in Narcotic Drugs, Psychotropic Substances and Precursors and Organised Crime – Ratified by Latvia on 8 January 2009; Ratified by Malta on 19 January 2009; Entered into force on 23 January 2009.
Bulgaria	Agreement on Police Cooperation. Ratified by Bulgaria on 4 February 2009; Ratified by Malta on 10 March 2009; entered into force on 18 May 2009.
Italy	Protocol to the Agreement between Malta and Italy for the Avoidance of Double Taxation with respect to Taxes on Income and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasions. Signed on 13 March 2009. Ratified by Malta on 28 July 2009.
Italy	Memorandum of Understanding on Defence Cooperation; Ratified by Malta on 11 June 2008; Ratified by Italy on 23 June 2009; Entered into force on 25 June 2009.
Serbia	Agreement for the Avoidance of Double Taxation with respect to Taxes on Income and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasions. Signed on 9 September 2009. Ratified by Malta on 18 December 2009.
San Marino	Protocol amending the Convention between Malta and San Marino with respect to Taxes on Income, which was signed on 3 May 2005. Signed on 10 September 2009. Ratified by Malta on 15 December 2009.
Slovak Republic	Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic and the Ministry for Social Policy of Malta concerning Cooperation in respect of Inter-Country Adoptions. Signed on 24 September 2009.
Bulgaria	Protocol on Cooperation between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Malta and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria. Signed on 20 October 2009.
Isle of Man	Agreement for the Avoidance of Double Taxation with respect to Taxes on Income and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasions. Signed on 23 October 2009.
Spain	Memorandum of Understanding on Education between the Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport of Malta and the Ministry of Education of Spain regarding the Exchange of English and Spanish Language Assistants in Primary and Secondary Schools of both Countries. Signed and entered into force on 26 November 2009.
Spain	Joint Statement on the Strengthening of Cooperation between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Malta and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Kingdom of Spain. Signed and entered into force on 26 November 2009.
Spain	Memorandum of Academic Cooperation between the Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies at the University of Malta and the Diplomatic School of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Spain. Signed and entered into force on 26 November 2009.
Spain	Memorandum of Understanding regarding Archives between Malta and Spain. Signed and entered into force on 26 November 2009.
Spain	Memorandum of Understanding between Malta and Spain for Cooperation in the area of Cultural Heritage. Signed and entered into force on 26 November 2009.
Spain	Memorandum of Understanding on the establishment of the Malta-Spain Joint Committee on Merchant Shipping. Signed and entered into force on 26 November 2009.
Spain	Cooperation Programme in the areas of Culture, Education and Science between Malta and Spain for 2009-2012. Signed on 26 November 2009.
Italy	Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry for Social Policy of Malta and the Ministry of Health of the Italian Republic on Cooperation in the field of Health and Medical Sciences. Signed and entered into force on 23 December 2009.
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Stabilization and Association Agreement between the European Communities and their Member States and Bosnia and Herzegovina, done at Luxembourg on 16 June 2008. Instrument of Ratification signed by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs on 10 December 2009.

GENERAL AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE DIRECTORATE

The main objectives of this Directorate are to promote Malta within the international trade community; to assist in the formulation and promotion of Malta's positions on the different European issues; preparation for Ministerial participation in the General Affairs and External Relations Council; and to enhance Maltese culture, identity and traditions abroad.

This Directorate continued to monitor issues falling under the General Affairs Council which included the enlargement process of the European Union, institutional issues such as the Lisbon Treaty, External Trade and general European policy questions. It was also responsible for the legal transposition of the legislative instruments of which the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is the lead Ministry and monitored the pipeline *acquis* and the formulation of the necessary memoranda.

The Directorate pushed forward the enlargement strategy of the Union and, when required, gave its feedback to the common positions of EU Member States and, through the regular participation in the Council Working Party on Enlargement and Countries negotiating Accession. The Directorate continued to follow closely the accession negotiations of Croatia and Turkey with continuous input to the Permanent Representation in Brussels on chapter negotiations. This Directorate also monitored developments following the official submission of accession candidacy of Albania, Iceland and Serbia.

The Directorate continued to actively participate in negotiations and decision making processes within the OSCE through attendance in EU Coordination Meetings prior to OSCE meetings in an effort to forge common positions between the Members of the European Union. It focused its attention particularly in talks between the OSCE and the Mediterranean Partners for Cooperation, namely, Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia. In addition, an official from this Directorate regularly attends the COSCE Working Group meetings which primarily addresses OSCE matters.

In December 2009, the Directorate, in close cooperation with the Greek Chairmanship of the OSCE organised a Workshop entitled *Supply Chain Security*. This Workshop provided Malta with the opportunity to showcase its knowledge on the security of frontiers and supply chain provisions and to host high officials from international organisations such as the United Nations (UN) and the International Maritime Organisation (IMO). The importance of this Workshop can also be seen against the background of Malta Freeport's success story in the shipment of cargo in the Mediterranean region.

In the Council of Europe (CoE), this Directorate together with Malta's Representation to the CoE followed closely the debate on illegal immigration to ensure that Malta's national interest in this sensitive subject is safeguarded.

The Directorate continued to fulfil its objective related to the workings of the Sanctions Monitoring Board, with the Director General for European and Economic Affairs acting as Chairman. It regularly monitored developments with respect to the sanctions regime both at the level of the United Nations as well as at the European Union. In 2009, these included sanctions proposed against the Democratic Republic of Korea and Somalia. An official from this Directorate, who acts as the secretary of the Sanctions Monitoring Board, attended regularly the EU Council Working Groups on sanctions.

Throughout 2009, this Directorate, in coordination with its international network of diplomatic and consular representation abroad, continued to contribute to the wider effort to attract overseas investment to Malta, increase the export of Maltese goods and services and promote tourism, financial and maritime services abroad. In this respect, the Ministry, through this Directorate, enhanced its collaboration with other relevant business related Government entities and constituted bodies especially Malta Enterprise, the Malta Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Industry, the Chamber for Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (GRTU) and Finance Malta.

The Directorate also received on a regular basis, trade enquiries and prospective business opportunities from Malta's diplomatic representation abroad and disseminated this information to all interested parties. It was also responsible for the monitoring of international economic relations and the preparation of trade and other economic statistics/reports and the organisation of business delegations in conjunction with Presidential Official/State Visits.

During the year, the Directorate together with Malta Enterprise organised two business delegations which accompanied the President of Malta and the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs on an

Official Visit to Poland in January and on a State Visit to Qatar in August. Business seminars highlighting business opportunities and pre-arranged business one-to-one meetings were also organised in the course of these visits.

The Directorate in collaboration with other relevant government entities, social partners and the private sector was also constantly involved both in the organisation of various local commercial related seminars and in a good number of incoming commercial delegations from a wide range of countries, including Tunisia, Brazil, Morocco, Angola and Poland. Moreover, the Directorate was involved in coordinating talks held at the Ministry regarding the formation of a Malta/Tunisia Business Council.

The Directorate was also actively involved in the tripartite Internationalisation Committee meetings (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Malta Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Industry and Malta Enterprise) with the aim of coordinating cooperation between Government and the Private Sector on the internationalisation of businesses.

In 2009, the Directorate was in regular contact with the Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport (MEDC), the Malta Council for Culture and the Arts (MCCA), Heritage Malta (HM), the University of Malta, the Malta Tourism Authority (MTA) and other local organisations directly or indirectly involved in the cultural sector. The aim of such contacts was to enhance the promotion of Maltese culture overseas. In this regard, the Directorate was also of on going service to Maltese Missions abroad and assisted in several cultural initiatives.

This Directorate is also represented on the Inter-Ministerial Commission (IMC) for the European Capital of Culture (ECOC) – 2018. Malta and the Netherlands have been twinned to host the European Capital of Culture for the year 2018.

In a bid to bring Maltese culture closer to people overseas, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs embarked on a two-tiered structured plan aimed to increase cultural activities locally and intensify cultural initiatives in our Missions abroad. To this extent during September an *ad hoc* Committee for the Promotion of Culture Abroad was set up within this Ministry to come up with a coherent strategy in this direction. The *ad hoc* Committee consists of a Chairman and representatives from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sports and the Parliamentary Secretary for Tourism.

JOSEPH COLE

Director General (European and Economic Affairs)

Department for Citizenship & Expatriate Affairs

The Department's main function is to administer and implement the provisions of the Citizenship and Immigration legislation and relative policies. In undertaking the relative tasks in order to carry out the said function during the year under review the, Department continued to play a significant role in the management of the legal migration process in Malta.

CITIZENSHIP

The main tasks of the Department in the field of citizenship are to:

- Process applications for naturalisation or registration as citizens of Malta ;
- Confirm the national status of persons who have a claim to Maltese citizenship; and
- Confirm the right of persons possessing Maltese nationality to hold dual/multiple citizenship.

The developments, which have occurred during the last 20 years in Maltese citizenship legislation and the migration movement of Maltese nationals, have ensured that the Department is kept intensely occupied in its tasks also during the year 2009.

With the amendments to the Maltese Citizenship Act (Cap 188) in 2007, the possibility for a person of Maltese descent born abroad acquiring Maltese citizenship was given new dimensions. As a result of such legislation, children born outside Malta, prior to Independence, of mothers, who were born in Malta and who became citizens of Malta on 21 September 1964, as well as second and subsequent generations of Maltese migrants also born abroad, became eligible to acquire Maltese citizenship by registration, that is, as of right, following the submission of the relative application.

During 2009, the Department, mainly through Malta Missions abroad, continued to receive a steady flow of applications from persons in the said categories. The majority of such applications, as was expected, were mainly from the Australian continent. Some of the applicants were descendants of Maltese migrants who had left Malta in the 19th century.

The Department continued to receive also numerous enquiries from persons of Maltese descent seeking information on their eligibility (or otherwise) and on the procedure to follow in order to acquire Maltese citizenship. At times the interested persons, who are of a third or fourth generation born abroad, have to trace documentation, going as far back as the early 19th century to prove their descent and eligibility in order to apply for registration as citizens of Malta.

The Department endeavoured to deal with the resultant workload and managed to increase its output over the previous year in the processing of the said citizenship applications/enquiries.

MIGRATION (EXPATRIATES)

Following the completion in 2007 of the gradual migration, which had started in late 2006, of the functions concerning the issue of residence documents to EU and Non-EU Nationals from the Police Immigration Authorities, the Department, during the year under review, continued issuing residence documentation to the majority of the different categories of foreigners who are authorised to reside in Malta.

In the case of third country nationals, such documentation consists of a (uniform) residence permit issued in the form of a sticker affixed in the holder's passport and issued in the format and containing the specific security features established by the relative EU Regulation. This document is of special relevance to its holders because it entitles them to travel in and permits them to enter and exit Schengen territory without the requirement of a visa.

The categories of such third country nationals are linked to the purpose of the stay for which the persons concerned have been authorised to reside in Malta. Amongst others, such purpose could be work, study, family formation, long term residence or an inherent right in the case of spouses and dependents of Maltese nationals. The relative authorisation is granted on the basis of legislation provided for in the Immigration Act (Cap 217) and subsidiary legislation and current policy. Since Malta joined the EU, directives dealing with migration issues such as the admittance of third country nationals for the purpose of study, family reunification, research and long term residence have been transposed into Maltese legislation and thus provide the Department with guidelines for the management of Malta's legal migration process.

The Department continued to give a one-stop shop service to persons entitled to hold exempt person status/freedom of movement, that is, the foreign spouses of citizens of Malta and their dependents. Following the provision of this service, the persons concerned were no longer required to call at the Police Immigration Office to have their passports stamped with the relative endorsement that reflected such immigration position, but instead are issued with a residence document in the above-mentioned format in order to facilitate their movements in the Schengen territory.

In the beginning of 2009 Malta started issuing those persons, enjoying international protection and holding subsidiary protection, with an Alien's passport for emergency travel purposes. It was decided that persons who are issued with such a document and refugees holding a travel document issued under the provisions of the 1951 UN Convention relating to the status of Refugees, may apply for a residence permit at the Department, which permit would be affixed on the holder's travelling document. The number of requests was considerable and during the period June to end December 2009, 616 residence permits were issued to persons granted international protection.

As regards EU nationals and their family members, who are in the exercise of any of their Treaty Rights as workers, self-employed persons, economically self-sufficient persons or students, in Malta and who are required, therefore, in accordance with both EU and national legislation to register their residence in Malta, these are issued with a residence document, also in the form of a sticker (in a different format from that mentioned above). EU nationals are issued with the said sticker affixed on a special card whilst in the case of their family members, who are third country nationals, it is affixed on their passport.

All documentation regarding these residence permits is issued by means of an IT system developed for this purpose. During 2009 the IT system was revisited and Malta Information Technology Agency (MITA) has provided an updated version of the system which is more efficient. Such system is indispensable in providing statistical information which, as from 2009, it is mandatory for Malta to provide to the EU in terms of the relative EU regulation on migration statistics.

The Department's function requires the support of the Police Immigration Office, with whom it continued to work in full cooperation during the year 2009, especially to clear applications from a security point of view and to curb abuse, where this emerges, when processing applications for residence permits.

PRESENT/FUTURE ACTIVITIES

The number of potential applicants who are eligible to apply for registration as citizens of Malta on the basis of the year 2007 amendments is huge, considering the hundreds of thousands of Maltese migrants who left our shores in the past. The Department would, therefore, have to continue to fully cope with the demand for information about Maltese citizenship and to deal with the relative applications for registration in an expeditious manner.

The Department's role concerning migration has continued to widen to the extent that it encompasses totally the categories of foreigners involved in the process concerning legal migration and the relative tasks demand that the Department should be more vigilant on abuse and efficient and effective in the issue of documentation. The mobility through Schengen territory, by means of the uniform residence permit, imposes on the Department the requirement to process in reasonable timeframes, a number of exigent requests.

In view of recently adopted EU legislation, Malta would have to adopt biometric residence documents which are issued to third country nationals, by 2011. The Department, together with the other ministries involved, would be making preparations to have such documentation available as required by the said legislation.

EU RELATED MATTERS

In view of the Department's role in the migration process and of the emerging EU legislation in this regard, the undersigned has participated in the meetings of the Commission's Technical and Advisory Committees on the free movement of workers as well as in other committees of experts on migration. It is imperative that the Department should continue to participate in such fora in order to keep itself informed on the interpretation of the existing provisions and as regards further developments of the *acquis communautaire* dealing with migration matters.

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Nationality

The Department continued to deal with enquiries regarding the national status of both Maltese and non-Maltese citizens and with applications for the acquisition of the citizenship of Malta under the provisions of the Maltese Citizenship Act. During the year, 745 persons were registered as citizens of Malta whilst 74 others were naturalised as citizens of Malta, as shown in Appendices A and B.

Applications for naturalisation made under the Maltese Citizenship Act are considered in the light of the established Citizenship Guidelines for the grant (or refusal) of citizenship: 13 applications for citizenship were refused in 2009.

The number of persons who acquired Maltese citizenship during the past five years is as follows:

Year	Registration	Naturalisation	Total
2005	490	72	562
2006	406	68	474
2007	460	93	553
2008	594	50	644
2009	745	74	819

Dual Nationality

During the year the Department continued to deal with quite a number of enquiries concerning dual citizenship. Former Maltese citizens, who have resided abroad for more than six years, may hold dual nationality, provided the relative conditions laid down in the Maltese Citizenship Act are satisfied. A breakdown of the number of confirmations issued up to the end of 2009 is given at Appendix C.

EXPATRIATES

Persons who enjoy 'Freedom of Movement'

This Department is responsible also for confirming that persons to whom Section 44 of the Constitution refers enjoy freedom of movement, that is, the right to remain in Malta and to work here (without the necessity of a work permit). Confirmations issued by this Department during the year cover 77 persons. Details of confirmations issued during the past five years are shown at Appendix B.

'Exempt Person' Status to the Foreign Husband of a Citizen of Malta

As from 1 August 1989 the foreign husband of a female citizen of Malta enjoys *exempt person* status. This means that if the said husband wishes to work in Malta he does not require a work permit whereas if he merely wishes to reside here he is not required to have his permit to reside in Malta renewed periodically. The number of persons to whom such status was confirmed during 2009 was 85.

'Exempt Person' Status to the Foreign Wife of a Citizen of Malta

As from 24 April 2001 the foreign wife of a citizen of Malta enjoys freedom of movement only after five years from the date of marriage. Until then she enjoys *exempt person* status which nevertheless gives her the right to remain and to work in Malta. During the year 111 wives of citizens of Malta were informed that they enjoy *exempt person* status.

UNIFORM RESIDENCE PERMITS

During the year, 7,589 applications were received from third country nationals for the issue of a uniform residence permit. The number of such permits issued during the period under review was 6,838. Third country nationals, whose application is still being processed, are issued with an interim permit authorising them to reside here until a decision is taken on their case. The total number of persons, their nationality and the type of permit held by such persons as on 31 December 2009 is shown in Appendix D.

The Department received also 1,228 applications for residence documents in respect of EU citizens and their family members, who are third country nationals, for the necessary processing. 918 documents were issued.

REVENUE

During 2009 the Department derived € 243,622 from fees charged for various services.

JOSEPH MIZZI

Director (Citizenship & Expatriate Affairs)

APPENDIX A

FOREIGNERS REGISTERED AS CITIZENS OF MALTA UNDER
THE MALTESE CITIZENSHIP ACT, CAP 188 - 2009

Nationality	Husbands of Citizens of Malta	Wives of Citizens of Malta	Former Citizens of Malta	Children of a Maltese Mother	Minor Children of Maltese Descent	Persons of Maltese Descent	Total
Albanian	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Australian	22	22	7	83	43	134	311
Azerbaijan	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Belarus	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Bosnian	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
British	8	16	3	35	18	19	99
Bulgarian	2	1	-	-	-	-	3
Canadian	3	7	1	9	6	16	42
Chile	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Chinese	1	1	-	-	-	-	2
Czech	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Danish	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
Dutch	4	4	-	-	-	-	8
Egyptian	4	2	-	-	-	7	13
Estonian	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Filipino	-	7	-	-	1	-	8
Finnish	-	2	-	-	-	-	2
French	1	1	-	1	3	6	12
German	-	4	-	-	1	-	5
Gibraltar	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Guatemala	-	-	-	-	4	-	4
Guyana	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Hungarian	-	-	-	-	2	-	2
Indian	3	-	-	-	-	-	3
Iranian	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Irish	-	2	-	1	-	-	3
Israeli	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Italian	16	-	-	9	-	5	30
Kazakhstani	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Libyan	16	1	-	1	-	-	18
Malaysian	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Mexican	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Moroccan	-	7	-	-	-	-	7
New Zealand	1	1	-	-	8	5	15
Nigerian	10	1	-	-	3	-	14
Norwegian	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Polish	-	2	-	-	1	-	3
Romanian	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Russian	-	10	-	-	-	-	10
Serbian	2	3	-	-	1	-	6
Slovenian	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
South African	5	3	-	3	11	16	38
Swedish	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
Swiss	-	2	-	1	-	-	3
Syrian	6	-	-	-	-	-	6
Taiwan	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Thai	-	5	-	-	1	-	6
Tunisian	1	1	-	-	1	1	4
Turkish	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Ukrainian	-	6	-	-	-	-	6
United States of America	3	3	2	8	9	12	37
Uzbekistani	-	2	-	-	-	-	2
Stateless	-	1	-	-	1	-	2
Total	117	124	13	153	116	222	745

APPENDIX B

**FOREIGNERS NATURALISED AS CITIZENS OF MALTA UNDER
THE MALTESE CITIZENSHIP ACT, CAP 188 - 2009**

Nationality	Males	Females	Total
Albanian	3	-	3
Algerian	2	-	2
Australian	1	-	1
Belarus	2	-	2
Bosnian	1	-	1
British	1	1	2
Bulgarian	-	2	2
Chinese	4	-	4
Czech	3	-	3
Ecuadorian	2	-	2
Filipino	-	1	1
Iraqi	1	-	1
Jordanian	1	-	1
Lebanese	-	1	1
Libyan	7	1	8
Moroccan	-	1	1
Romanian	1	1	2
Russian	4	7	11
Sierra Leone	1	-	1
Spanish	-	1	1
Swedish	1	-	1
Thai	1	-	1
Turkish	1	-	1
Ukrainian	3	-	3
Stateless	6	12	18
Total	46	28	74

PERSONS INFORMED THAT THEY ENJOY 'FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT'

Category of Persons Year	Persons born in Malta who ceased to be Maltese citizens whilst being emigrated (Sections 3(1) and 5(1) of the Maltese Citizenship Act)	Children of Maltese Emigrants (Column 1) or of Citizens of Malta, who are under 21 years of age and who hold another citizenship	Non-Maltese Wives of Maltese Citizens or of Persons appearing in Column 1	Non-Maltese Husbands of Maltese Citizens or of Persons appearing in Column 1*	Total
2005	2	54	8	11	75
2006	9	46	5	9	69
2007	2	48	17	5	72
2008	-	46	17	24	87
2009	2	39	17	19	77

* As from 24/04/2001 (and provided they have been married for at least 5 years)

APPENDIX C

CITIZENS OF MALTA ALSO HOLDING CITIZENSHIP OF THE COUNTRY INDICATED - 2009

Country	Confirmations Issued during						Total
	1989-1999*	2000-2005**	2006	2007	2008	2009	
Algeria	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Australia	1,594	1,767	150	196	202	174	4,083
Austria	1	1	-	-	-	-	2
Belgium	4	1	-	-	-	-	5
Brazil	14	12	-	-	-	-	26
Canada	1,894	1,188	142	161	196	106	3,687
Denmark	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Egypt	-	5	-	-	1	2	8
Finland	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
France	13	19	4	3	1	3	43
Germany	4	19	-	1	1	-	25
Greece	6	5	-	-	-	1	12
Holland	13	8	1	-	1	-	23
India	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Ireland	3	10	2	2	2	-	19
Israel	1	1	-	-	-	-	2
Italy	271	190	7	5	9	5	487
Jamaica	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Jordan	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Libya	-	28	1	4	4	4	41
Mexico	-	3	-	-	-	-	3
New Zealand	21	10	-	1	4	-	36
Nigeria	-	2	-	-	-	-	2
Norway	2	-	-	-	-	-	2
Pakistan	-	4	-	-	-	1	5
Poland	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Sierra Leone	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Singapore	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
South Africa	7	17	5	4	6	11	50
Spain	1	1	-	-	-	-	2
St Christopher	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Sweden	-	5	1	-	-	-	6
Switzerland	21	10	-	1	-	-	32
Syria	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Tunisia	2	1	-	-	-	-	3
United Kingdom	906	1,557	74	99	106	70	2,812
United States	918	788	108	78	103	69	2,064
Zimbabwe	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Total	5,700	5,658	497	555	636	446	13,492

* For year by year details, see Report for 2000

** For year by year details see Reports for 2005 and 2006

APPENDIX D

RESIDENCE PERMITS HELD BY THIRD COUNTRY NATIONALS AS ON 31 DECEMBER 2009

Country of Origin / Purpose	Work	Family member	Exempt Persons	Economically Self-sufficient	Long Term Resident	Partner	Study	Health Reasons	Religious Purpose	Humanitarian	Temporary	International protection	Interim Permit	Total
Albania	12	6	14		11		2				4		14	63
Algeria	4		2	1	3						1		5	16
Argentina	2			3	1								4	10
Armenia	2		2	16									4	24
Australia	7		19	16	2		2				25		5	76
Azerbaijan	1		2	4							3		1	11
Bahamas	1												1	2
Bangladesh	5	4	1	1	4						1		4	20
Belarus	3		15	4	1	2					4		5	34
Belize				3			1							4
Benin			1											1
Bolivia	1													1
Bosnia & Herzegovina	69	13	11	7	30	1		1	1	1	2		30	166
Brazil	5		1	3		2			1		11		13	36
British National Overseas	1	1		1	4									7
Burma			1											1
Cambodia													1	1
Cameroon	4		2								4		2	12
Canada	7	1	18	9	1		1				8		10	55
Chile											6		1	7
China	191	22	36	121	42	3	24				38		129	606
Colombia	2		4	1							4		2	13
Congo			2											2
Costa Rica	1										1		1	3
Cote D'Ivoire (Ivory Coast)			1											1
Croatia	24	7	4	2	9						3		6	55
Cuba			3								2			5
Dominica				7										7
Dominican Republic				6							1			7
Ecuador			1								1			2
Egypt	31	5	23	26	11		2		1		22		25	146
El Salvador	1		1										1	3
Eritrea											1	90	5	96
Ethiopia	1		1	1			1					3	1	8
Gambia													1	1
Georgia	9	2	3	9	4						5		16	48
Ghana			1				1				1		4	7
Grenada				1										1
Guatemala			1											1

RESIDENCE PERMITS HELD BY THIRD COUNTRY NATIONALS AS ON 31 DECEMBER 2009

Country of Origin / Purpose	Work	Family member	Exempt Persons	Economically Self-sufficient	Long Term Resident	Partner	Study	Health Reasons	Religious Purpose	Humanitarian	Temporary	International protection	Interim Permit	Total
India	155	12	9	15	13		4		13		20		65	306
Indonesia	5		1			1							3	10
Iran	3			8							1		2	14
Iraq	1		1			1						8	2	13
Israel	4	3	1	8							5		1	22
Jamaica													1	1
Japan	9		13	4	2		3				15		18	64
Jordan	3	1	7		2	1					3		6	23
Kazakhstan			4				3				3		3	13
Kenya	2	1							4				7	14
Korea							1				20		11	32
Korea (DPR)	5										7		15	27
Kuwait	1		1				117						2	121
Kyrgyzstan	4		2	3							1		1	11
Lebanon	8	1	4	2	1	1					4		7	28
Libya	91	54	69	67	9	1	2				70	1	77	441
Macedonia	2	1	3		3						1		1	11
Madagascar											1			1
Malaysia	3	2	3		1								2	11
Maldives	3													3
Mauritius	4													4
Mexico			2								1		3	6
Moldova	11		8		1	1					5		9	35
Mongolia	1													1
Montenegro	2	2			1		1				1		1	8
Morocco	18	2	67	1	1	2					28		33	152
Myanmar									2					2
Nepal	1							3			2		1	7
New Zealand	1		3	1							6		1	12
Nicaragua											3			3
Nigeria	12	5	45	2	4	1	4				17			90
Pakistan	20	1	1	6	9				5		9		15	66
Palestine		5	6				3					2	3	19
Panama	1													1
Peru	3		8								2		1	14
Philippines	174	3	34	7	13	4			2	1	12		117	367
Republic of Serbia	177	40	46	65	97	3	2				26		203	659
Russia	86	29	226	97	34	21	21				121		139	774
Rwanda													1	1
Saudi Arabia				4									1	5
Seychelles				1	1						1			3
Sierra Leone			5				1					1		7
Singapore	3			4							1		1	9

RESIDENCE PERMITS HELD BY THIRD COUNTRY NATIONALS AS ON 31 DECEMBER 2009

Country of Origin / Purpose	Work	Family member	Exempt Persons	Economically Self-sufficient	Long Term Resident	Partner	Study	Health Reasons	Religious Purpose	Humanitarian	Temporary	International protection	Interim Permit	Total
Somalia											1	496	32	529
South Africa	14		5	33	3						3		4	62
Sri Lanka	1		1				1		1				2	6
Sudan	3					1					3	11	4	22
Surinam				1										1
Syria	4	4	27		4	1					13	4	18	75
Taiwan	1		1	1										3
Tanzania	2										1			3
Thailand	18	1	56	1	4	3					9		27	119
Tunisia	18	18	43		9	3	1	1			9		15	117
Turkey	79	10	27	21	16		9				38		65	265
Uganda	1													1
Ukraine	67	19	94	52	14	11					36		61	354
United States of America	39	8	26	9	5	1	23				23		40	174
Uzbekistan	4		1	1	1	1	1				2		1	12
Venezuela											1			1
Viet Nam					1								2	3
Zambia				3										3
Zimbabwe					1									1
Total	1448	283	1020	659	373	66	231	5	30	2	673	616	1315	6721

Protocol and Consular Services Directorate

VISITS

During this period, the Directorate was responsible for assisting in the preparatory organisational work and in the implementation of visits to Malta by foreign dignitaries, notably: HE Mr Xi Jinping, Vice-President of the People's Republic of China; HE Mr Georgi Parvanov, President of the Republic of Bulgaria; HE Mr Donald Dusk, Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland; and His Majesty King Juan Carlos I, King of Spain.

Official visits were made by the EU Commissioners responsible for: Education and Culture, HE Mr Jan Figel; Justice, Freedom and Security, HE Mr Jacques Barrot; Enterprise and Industry, HE Mr Gunther Verheugen; Transport, HE Mr Antonio Tajani; Trade, HE Ms Catherine Ashton; Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, HE Mr Vladimir Spidla; and External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy, H.E Dr Benita Ferrero-Waldner.

Other Ministers to visit Malta were: Minister of Culture of the People's Republic of China - Hon Cai Wu; Minister of for Foreign Affairs of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria - HE Mr Mourad Medelici; Minister of Foreign Affairs of France - HE Mr Bernard Kouchner; Chairman Malta-Germany Parliamentary Group - Hon Mr Ernst-Reinhard Beck MP; Deputy Foreign Minister for the Palestine National Authority - HE Dr Ahmad Soboh; Minister of Foreign Affairs of Tunisia - HE Mr Abdelwaheb Abdallah; Director General of Moët Hennessy - Mr Christophe Navarre; Budgetary Affairs Committee of the Chamber of Deputies of the Czech Republic Parliament; Minister for Industry, Republic of Angola - HE Mr Joaoquim Duarte da Costa David; State Secretary of Justice from The Netherlands - Ms Nebahat Albayrak; Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iceland - HE Mr Ossur Skarpheoinsson; Swedish Minister for the Environment - HE Andreas Carlgren; Undersecretary to the Ministry of Education, University and Research of Italy - Mr Giuseppe Pizza; Vice-Minister of the Ministry of Commerce PR China, Heading the Eight Sino-Maltese Economic and Trade Mixed Commission (China) - Mr Jiang Zengwei; Swedish Minister for Migration - HE Mr Tobias Billstrom; French Minister of Immigration, Integration, National Identity and Solidarity Development - HE Eric Besson; Undersecretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Finland - Mrs Marjatta Rasi; President of the Korea-Malta Parliamentary Friendship Association, Republic of Korea - HE Mr Lee Yong-kyung; Secretary of Foreign Affairs, General People's Congress, Libya - HE Mr Suleiman Shoumi; Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia - HE Mr Vuk Jeremic; President of the European Union Affairs Committee of the Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic - HE Ludek Sefzig; Secretary-General of the League of Arab States - HE Amre Moussa; Commonwealth Secretary General - HE Mr Kamallesh Sharma; Chairwoman of the Committee on Federal and European Affairs of the Bavarian Landtag (State Assembly) - Profs. Ursula Mannle; Speaker of the Senate of Canada - HE Senator Noel Kinsella; Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic - HE Mr Miroslav Lajcak; and Norwegian State Secretary for Foreign Affairs - HE Ms Elizabeth Walaas.

FAREWELL CALLS

In addition to the above, the Directorate set up a number of programmes for routine visits by non-resident Ambassadors and farewell calls. The Directorate also coordinated the visit to Malta by 24 non-resident Ambassadors in connection with the programme of the exchange of New Year's Greetings.

During this period, the term of duty ended for the following Ambassadors : Ambassador of the Kingdom of Morocco; High Commissioner of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan; High Commissioner of the republic of South Africa; Ambassador of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam; Ambassador of the People's Republic of China; Ambassador of the Kingdom of Thailand; Ambassador of the United States of America; Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands; Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; Ambassador of the Arab Republic of Egypt; Ambassador of the Federative Republic of Brazil; and Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany.

ACCREDITATIONS

This Directorate sought and obtained the *agrément*s and/or credentials of the following Maltese Ambassadors: Mr Joseph G P Bonello, non-resident Ambassador to the Republic of Albania; Dr Tanya Vella, non-resident Ambassador to the Principality of Andorra and to the Kingdom of Spain; Mr Mark Miceli-Farrugia, non-resident High Commissioner to The Commonwealth of the Bahamas and to Canada; Mr Godwin Montanaro, non-resident Ambassador to the Kingdom of Bahrain; Mr Pierre Clive Agius, Ambassador to the Kingdom of Belgium and Ambassador of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg; Mr Richard Vella Laurenti, non-resident High Commissioner to Cyprus; Dr Mark A Miggiani, Ambassador to the French Republic and non-resident Ambassador to the Principality of Monaco; Mr Paul Bonello, non-resident Ambassador to the Republic of Iceland; Mr Joseph Zammit Tabona, non-resident Ambassador to Ireland and to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland; Mr Karl Xuereb, non-resident High Ambassador to Japan; Dr George Cassar, Ambassador to the People's Bureau of the Great Socialist people's Libyan Arab Jamahirija; Mr Laurence Grech, non-resident Ambassador to the Republic of Lithuania; Mr John M Rizzo Naudi Jr, non-resident High Commissioner to Malaysia and to the Republic of Singapore; Mr Gaetan Naudi, Ambassador to the Republic of Poland; Dr Joseph Cassar, Ambassador to the Republic of Portugal; Mr Godwin Montanaro, Ambassador to the State of Qatar; Mr Anthony Miceli Demajo, non-resident Ambassador to Romania; Mr Charles Inguanez, Ambassador to the Russian Federation; Mr Giovanni Miceli, non-resident Ambassador to Sudan; and Dr Vicky Ann Cremona, Ambassador to the Republic of Tunisia.

CREDENTIALS

During 2009, Ambassadors and High Commissioners of the following countries presented their credentials to the President of Malta: United Kingdom (15 Jan), Angola (22 Jan), Moldova (22 Jan), Georgia (12 Feb), Japan (12 Feb), Sudan (26 Mar), Ghana (26 Mar), Peru (26 Mar), Chile (26 Mar), Bosnia (28 May), Indonesia (28 May), Germany (16 July), Netherlands (17 Sep), Egypt (17 Sep), China (17 Sep), United States of America (17 Sep), Turkey, (8 Oct), Pakistan, (8 Oct), Vietnam, (8 Oct), Australia (17 Dec), The Gambia (17 Dec), Philippines (17 Dec), Canada (17 Dec).

HONORARY CONSULS

During the year the following new consular posts abroad were favourably considered and appointed: Mr George A Borg Olivier, Honorary Consul in Brisbane; Mr Alban Thika, Honorary Consul in Tirana; Mr Marco Gonzalo Torrico Flores, Honorary Consul in La Paz; Mr Rupert Agius-Pease, Honorary Consul in Ottawa; Mr Stephen Holmes, Honorary Consul in Vancouver; Dr Alain Muller, Honorary Consul in Lille; Mr Daniel Houres, Honorary Consul in Marrakesh; Mr Håkan Pihl, Honorary Consul in Gothenburg; Mr Bjorn Andersson, Honorary Consul in Stockholm; Mr Patrick Barthet, Honorary Consul in Miami; Dr David Reuben Harris, upgraded to Honorary Consul General in Costa Rica.

An Exequatur was also issued to Ms Joan D'Artagna Portelli as Honorary Consul for Albania in Malta.

DIPLOMATIC CLEARANCES

Naval Vessels

During the year under review, the Directorate processed clearances for visiting 46 requests for visiting naval vessels from the UK, Italy, Germany, France, Spain, USA, Greece, Morocco, Canada, Belgium, the Netherlands, Sweden and NATO.

Over flights

Furthermore, the Directorate processed 521 diplomatic clearances for state/military aircrafts to overfly and/or land in Malta during the same period. The requests for diplomatic clearance were received from the following countries: Italy, United States of America, France, Switzerland, Palestine, China, Tunisia, Algeria, Libya, Serbia, Germany, Russian Federation, Greece, Spain, United Arab Emirates, Oman, United Kingdom, Canada, Brazil, Togo, the Netherlands, Saudi Arabia, Portugal, Turkey, Sudan, South Africa, Poland, Morocco, Sweden, Belgium, Ukraine, India, Israel, Jordan, Nigeria, Turkmenistan, Kuwait, Qatar, Argentina, Iran, Chile, Finland, Ethiopia, Mali, Benin, Pakistan, Angola, Egypt, Turkey, Cuba, Azerbaijan, Colombia, Venezuela, Montenegro, Zambia, Hungary, Czech Republic, the Gambia, Norway and the United Nations.

Military

During the same period the Directorate issued 24 clearances for the wearing of uniforms during military-related occasions by military personnel of the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Portugal, France and the Royal British Legion.

Clearances were also issued for 43 visits to Malta by military personnel from the United Kingdom and the Royal British Legion.

This Directorate also issued accreditation for five Defence Attachés/Deputy Defence Attachés from Germany, China, Greece, Japan and the United Kingdom.

Conferment of Foreign Decorations

The Directorate processed 17 requests from France, Germany, Spain, Australia, Italy, the United States of America and the Sovereign Military Order of Malta for the conferment decorations on Maltese citizens.

Diplomatic ID Cards

This Directorate issued a total of 246 Identity Cards to diplomatic (119), administrative (62), and service staff (21) of resident missions as well as for the consular corps in Malta (6) and that of Malta abroad (8) and the staff at international organisations (30).

PROTOCOL SERVICE TO THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS ACCREDITED TO MALTA

Duty Free

The Directorate processed around 300 requests from various resident missions for duty free entitlements on the purchase of cigarettes, spirits, alcohol and other specific purchases.

VAT Refunds

The Directorate continued to administer the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic relations of 1961 with respect to the diplomatic corps accredited to Malta by ensuring that the diplomatic privileges and immunities are being respected and implemented. In this context this Directorate processed 775 claims for VAT refund and referred them to the VAT Department for reimbursement.

Other Services

During 2009 this Directorate processed 882 requests for use of the VIP and Ministerial Lounge at the Malta International Airport.

This Directorate also extends assistance to embassies and international organisations in Malta as regards queries and requests concerning different ministries and government departments, such as Driving licences for Diplomats, Car Licences, Importation of cars, VAT Exemption, Issuing of Car Plates (CD, DMS and TF); other Licences such as Radio Transmission Licences.

This year this Directorate extended particular assistance to the Embassy of the Republic of Turkey which opened this year.

NATIONAL DAYS

This Directorate also transmitted numerous national day messages from the President of Malta to various Heads of State and vice versa.

AUTHENTICATIONS

The total income for 2009 was € 248,676. Throughout this year, 5,669 customers called at this Directorate to legalise a total of 19,626 documents.

VISAS

During the year, 458 visa applications of Maltese nationals were processed through Malta missions in Rome, Tripoli and London. Another 241 documents requiring legalisation abroad were also processed mainly through the missions in Rome and Tripoli.

SCHOLARSHIPS

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs offered three scholarships at Masters level in Legal, Economic, Political, Diplomatic or European studies. Ten applications were received out of which three were chosen. Two students are studying at the College of Europe in Bruges and one student is studying at the University of Sussex in the UK.

The following countries offered scholarships to Maltese students: Italy, Ireland, Tunisia, Japan, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Germany, Spain, Pakistan, Indonesia, Greece, China, Switzerland and USA, while Singapore and Israel offered short-term training courses to public officers in various fields.

In all, 70 applications were received of which 35 scholarships were either awarded by or recommended to the respective country. These were distributed as follows: Italy (15), Tunisia (3), China (1), Czech Republic (1), Germany (12) and IMLI (3). Six public officers went to Singapore and three went to Israel for short-term training.

Scholarships were also offered by MEDAC and IMLI.

ILLEGAL MIGRATION

In the last twelve months this Directorate kept continuous contact with the Maltese embassies and the Police Force in order to issue Emergency Travel Documents to third country nationals. In this regard, requests for 995 individuals were made.

ROGATORY LETTERS

During the past year this Directorate conveyed correspondence between the Maltese and foreign judicial authorities with regard to around 60 different Rogatory letters. Two requests were received for extradition of persons found in Malta.

ARREST AND DETENTION OF MALTESE

In cases where Maltese are detained or imprisoned by foreign Courts, the Ministry serves as a means of communication between the detainee and his/her family in Malta. During an exercise this Directorate carried out in June, there were 22 Maltese nationals detained in prisons in Australia, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Thailand, UK and USA.

CONSULAR COOPERATION WORKING GROUP (COCON)

This Directorate participates in the Consular Cooperation Working Group, which meets regularly with the aim to facilitate cooperation in consular matters between the member states.

EMERGENCY AND CRISES SITUATION

During the past year, there arose emergency situations in Honduras, Mexico, Gasbon, Guinea, Samoa and Sumatra and this Directorate kept contact with the authorities of the countries concerned, mainly through the COCON W/G to assist any nationals present.

TRAVEL ADVICE

The Directorate issued travel advice for Maltese travellers in accordance to current situations in the particular countries, which advice would be in harmonisation with those offered by other EU Member States.

OTHER CONSULAR SERVICES

The Directorate deals also with assistance to foreign missions with regard to consular services for their nationals, requests for information on Malta and Maltese law, specimen documentation as well as complaints by embassies or individuals.

Assistance is also regularly extended to the National Festivities Committee in state functions and National Days' events organised during the year.

DATA PROTECTION

The Protocol and Consular Services Directorate dealt with issues of data protection within the Ministry and participated in two Forums organised by the Data Protection Implementation Unit.

JOANNA PISANI

Acting Director (Protocol and Consular Services)

Central Visa Unit

INAUGURATION OF PREMISES

The new Central Visa Unit premises at Pjazza San Kalkidonju, Floriana were inaugurated by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs on 11 February. During the inauguration, the Deputy Prime Minister underlined the Unit's importance not only as an effective and professional immigration control in the interests of sustainable growth and social inclusion in Malta and the European Union, but also in its commitment to ensuring all visa applicants, who have a genuine reason to come to Malta, to do so with as little inconvenience as possible.

VISA WORKING PARTY MEETINGS

The Head of the Central Visa Unit participated regularly in the monthly Visa Working Party Meetings which examines proposed legal instruments aimed at improving the conditions for implementing the common visa policy. The VWP is also responsible for the European Union's negotiations with third countries concerning simplification of visa agreements, which the EU Commission deals with under a mandate by Member States.

During 2009, the VWP focused on two main adoptions – the amendment to Regulation (EC) 539/2001 allowing visa free access to citizens of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia, who as of 19 December 2009 were allowed to travel to the Schengen area without a visa; and to Regulation (EC) 810/2009 which established a Community Code on Visas and which constituted a development of the provisions of the Schengen *acquis*.

VISA CODE COMMITTEE

In July, the Head of the Central Visa Unit was appointed Malta's representative on the EU Commission's Visa Committee. The Committee met regularly in Brussels, between July and December, to discuss the preparation and compilation of the Visa Code Handbook publication containing operational instructions, best practices and recommendations for the provisions of the Community Code on Visas. The EU Commission will in 2010 be making the Handbook available to Member States in electronic form and the Central Visa Unit will be distributing this main tool relating to visa issuance procedures, to all of Malta's diplomatic missions and consular posts.

CONSULAR CO-LOCATION IN ALGERIA AND SERBIA

As a result of the Memorandum of Understanding between the MFA of Malta and the MFA of Spain to allow the use of the facilities and infrastructure of Spanish Consulates, three Visa Officers from the Central Visa Unit operated from the Spanish Consulates in Algiers and Belgrade, between March and October. During this period, the Visa Officers were involved in the processing of visa applications and issuance of visas to nationals of Algeria and Serbia.

CONSULAR REPRESENTATION AGREEMENT WITH FRANCE

In September, the Central Visa Unit concluded negotiations with the *Ministère des Affaires Étrangères et Européennes* of France, for representation by the French Consulates in Algeria, Benin, Burkina-Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Laos, Mauritius, Seychelles and Vietnam.

UNIVERSITY OF MALTA

In March, the Head of the Central Visa Unit was a guest lecturer at the Department of International Relations at the University of Malta. The two-hour presentation, entitled *The Schengen acquis & Malta's Visa Policy*, was very well attended by students from the Contemporary European Studies course.

MEETINGS

During the course of the year, the Head of the Central Visa Unit participated in the Annual Conference for Malta's Honorary Consuls on 9 March; attended the Deputy Prime Minister's meeting with the delegation from the Italian Senate's Schengen Committee on 16 July; and attended the Annual Conference for Malta's Ambassadors on 30 July.

PAUL DEMAJO ALBANESE
Head (Central Visa Unit)

Information Management Unit

INTERNATIONAL CONNECTIVITY

The international connectivity project has continued throughout 2009. The project consists of connecting diplomatic missions abroad to the government local infrastructure (MAGNET). In 2009 we included seven diplomatic missions, namely our offices in Turkey, Denmark, India, Israel (Tel Aviv and Ramallah), the Netherlands, and Poland. At the end of 2009 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had connected all but one (Dubai) to the government network, thus bringing the total to 34 different sites.

EXTERNAL BORDER FUNDS

2009 has been a very busy and interesting year for the Information Management Unit, where security is concerned. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has acquired €2.4 million from the External Border Funds to be spent on the upgrading of security within its diplomatic missions to facilitate the secure processing of visa applications. Apart from the security aspect, these funds helped the MFA to prepare embassies for the implementation of the new EU requirement to capture biometrics when processing visas. Through this funding (75% EU co-financing), the Ministry has successfully implemented 22 different projects across its existing embassies.

WEBSITE

In 2009 the Ministry website has seen the incorporation of 25 sites within it. These sites were aimed to provide space for the promotion of diplomatic missions abroad. 2009 is considered to be a successful year where the website is concerned especially when one considers that approximately 1,900 visitors visit the website every day.

VISA SYSTEM

The IMU has participated fully in EU meetings in relation to the European Visa Information System (VIS). In a nutshell, the EU VIS will bring together all Schengen states in an effort to share visa information. The EU VIS will also be incorporating the collection of fingerprints from visa applicants. During the course of 2009, the Ministry's visa system has gone through a number of changes to take on board EU requirements. Developments to the system were carried out by MITA and funding for the development was co-financed (75%) through the EU External Border Funds. Although it was decided at an EU level that the VIS would not *go live* as planned on 21 December 2009, Malta has nonetheless successfully passed all testing procedures as required by EU.

ELECTRONIC CASH MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

In an effort to manage public funds more efficiently, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has introduced a new cash management system to be used by all embassies abroad. As the payment process within Embassies is different from the local scenario, a cash management system has been designed with the help of MITA to meet the requirements of each individual embassies but still keep in line with financial regulations and which will also be able to update the government Department Account System (DAS). In doing so, the Corporate Services Directorate will have 'near' real time figures of the financial situation in each

individual embassy. During the course of this year, eight embassies have been trained and have successfully used the system. The project will continue with its implementation in 2010.

BIOMETRIC PASSPORTS

Although the issuance of biometric passports does not fall within the remit of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, diplomatic missions abroad play a very important role in the issuance of passports to Maltese citizens living abroad. The Ministry for Infrastructure, Transport and Communications (MITC) had launched in 2008 the biometric passport. The Information Management Unit has participated actively in discussions with the MITC with the aim of implementing the passport system within embassies abroad. In fact, as of 2009, the High Commission of London and Canberra together with Consulate General of Melbourne and Sydney are able to collect passport applications for the issuance of biometric passports. These sites are able to capture both biometric and alphanumeric data which are later securely transmitted electronically to the Passport Office in Malta for processing.

ANNA CATANIA
Chief Information Officer

Directorate for Corporate Services

HUMAN RESOURCES

As in the previous year, the need was felt to strengthen the Ministry's diplomatic structure. Recruitment was made to fill various posts at different levels of the diplomatic grading structure. One Senior Counsellor was appointed Ambassador, nine serving officers in the grade of First Secretary were appointed Counsellors, and nine Second Secretaries were appointed First Secretaries. By means of the external recruitment process, eight Second Secretaries were recruited. Furthermore, a call for the engagement of Second Secretaries was issued in December 2009 and the first part of the selection process is to be held in the early weeks of 2010.

During 2009, the Corporate Services Directorate processed and published an expression of interest from serving Executive Officers for the position of Protocol Officer. The deployment of Visa Officers within the Central Visa Unit was also processed. The Ministry filled one vacancy of Assistant Director Corporate Services and during the year Casual Substitute Clerks were recruited to replace officers on unpaid leave. Two Secretaries/Receptionists were recruited as support staff for the European Commission-League of Arab States Liaison Office in Floriana, which was inaugurated in October 2009.

In line with government policy, the Human Resources continued to pursue the necessary exercise of Progressions of the General Service grades. The exercise involved the grades of Senior Principal Officers, Principal and Assistant Principal Officers, Executive Officers and Clerical Officers. Meanwhile the HR section continued to service the general movements of staff as well as to cater for their development by monitoring their development through performance appraisal as well as training needs. The Human Resources also provided the necessary services to the outgoing and the returning diplomats in overseas missions abroad.

The HR also served the Ministry staff who retired from government service either through age or due to ill-health. The procedures were made in cooperation with OPM, Treasury and Social Security.

During the course of 2009, in line with current provision, the Ministry continued to support family-friendly measures and six officers were given the necessary support to avail themselves of teleworking whilst other officers were afforded the possibility of working on reduced and flexi-hours.

Training

The Ministry continued to give great importance to staff training both locally and abroad. During the period under review, an induction course was organised for newly-recruited Second Secretaries and Diplomatic Officers were provided with study leave to follow courses of further development at the University of Malta. Training in collaboration with the Armed Forces of Malta in Security Training Awareness was provided for security staff. Furthermore, staff at the Ministry availed themselves of training opportunities offered by the Staff Development Organisation .

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was selected as one of the chosen sites for the Pilot Project for the introduction of the Attendance Verification System and various training sessions were organised in collaboration with the Management and Personnel Office to train officers on the implementation of this

project. Further training in the Electronic Cash Management System was provided for seven accounting staff at Head Office and also for Malta's missions in Tunis, Istanbul, New Delhi and Paris.

Refurbishment

The Directorate was responsible for a project whereby Maison Notre Dame in Floriana was refurbished to house the Liaison Office between the European Commission and the Arab League. The Office was opened on 14 October 2009.

During 2009, continuous maintenance of the Ministry was carried out including the replacement and fixing of the electrical system as well as the replacement and fixing of air conditioners, plastering and painting at Palazzo Parisio, and maintenance of the lift. The fountain in the central courtyard of the Ministry was rehabilitated and the ceiling of the top floor was also fixed.

Green Initiatives

Efforts continued throughout 2009, so that awareness of the environment among the employees is increased. The majority of the light bulbs were replaced with energy saving ones. A campaign was also initiated so that employees use the stairs instead of the lift in order that physical exercise is expanded and at the same time electrical energy saved. A study was also undertaken for motion sensors to be installed so that light is switched on or off when necessary.

New Missions and Consulates

From a financial and administrative aspect, the Directorate of Corporate Services helped set up embassies in Tel Aviv and Ramallah as well as a Consulate in Istanbul.

The Directorate continued to be involved in the upgrading of various missions abroad; most refurbishment works were necessary in view of Schengen requirements, as well as the introduction of biometric passports.

Financial Management

During 2009, the Electronic Cash Management System started to be implemented. This electronic system connects the accounts systems at embassies with that of the Central Government in Malta so that efficiency in the use of allocated funds is increased. It is envisaged that the remaining embassies will be connected during 2010 until complete connection with all embassies is done in 2011.

ANGELE AZZOPARDI
Assistant Director (Corporate Services)

Ministry for Gozo

Office of the Permanent Secretary

Eco-Gozo/POLICY UNIT

The main action on eco-Gozo during 2009 focused on the continuation of an extensive public consultation programme initiated during 2008, and the compilation of the eco-Gozo vision document which has translated Government's eco-island vision of Sustainable Development for Gozo. The year also saw the allocation of a substantial sum of €25 million over the following three years for the implementation of the eco-Gozo project, the realisation of the first tangible initiatives and the publication of a document outlining Government's proposed action on eco-Gozo in the short-term, in the form of 80 proposals to be implemented in the period 2010-2012.

During 2009, a detailed analysis was carried out on the feedback received during the public consultation process on eco-Gozo. Following this exercise, around 60 experts were tasked with developing a strategy for the achievement of Sustainable Development objectives in 30 different themes related to the economy, society, the environment, culture and identity. All government ministries, authorities and public agencies were also consulted during this process. This exercise resulted in the development of a long-term sustainable development blueprint for the island of Gozo, which was presented to Government in October 2009. During the same month, as part of the Budget 2010 exercise, Government published the document 'Eco-Gozo - a better Gozo: Proposed Action 2010-2012'. This document outlines Government's proposed action for the achievement of the eco-Gozo vision in the short-term. During the same Budget process, Government also committed to provide an allocation of €25 million over three years for the implementation of this action plan.

During the same year, a number of initiatives related to eco-Gozo were initiated:

- Formal discussions were launched with the University of Malta on the development of the Government Experimental Farm in Xewkija into an Agriculture Research, Development and Innovation Centre. This project is expected to enter the implementation phase early in 2010.
- A number of new sites for Afforestation projects on Gozo were identified. Planning and other preliminary work on some of these sites was initiated during 2009, and is expected to continue during the coming year. Work on some of the sites is expected to start in 2010, while development applications for other sites will be submitted during the same year.
- A preliminary exercise on existing rainwater retention facilities in valleys was taken up, with the intention of restoring and cleaning these facilities in order to maximise the rainwater retention capability on the island. To date, around 30 of these facilities have been identified and assessed, and in the coming year restoration works on these facilities are expected to commence.
- A scheme for the restoration of traditional wind-powered water pumps was launched early in 2009. This scheme, open to registered farmers, proved popular and generated notable interest. On account of the wide interest shown, a second similar scheme is expected to be launched during 2010.
- Preliminary evaluations were carried out in collaboration with the MRRA and the University of Malta on the penetration of different renewable energy technologies on the island. This work is expected to continue during 2010.
- Various contacts and initiatives were undertaken to promote Gozo with companies and investors, particularly in view of possible investment compatible with the eco-Gozo vision.
- A number of initiatives related to the eco-island vision were taken in the educational sector in Gozo. These included an eco-Gozo day in all public and private Gozo schools, an ICT programme promoting the

embedding of eLearning and Sustainable Development in Primary School classes, a set of calendars for different age groups intended to convey messages on sustainable development themes, and the development of the first in a series of Teachers' Lesson Resource Packs which are intended to help teachers convey the message of sustainable development (and eco-Gozo) through the school curriculum. This resource pack contains lesson plans and resources required for 37 lessons covering 15 subjects.

- Eco-Gozo also featured in a number of events such as *Lejlet Lapsi – Notte Gozitana* organised by the Ministry for Gozo, the *Healthy village weekend* organised by the Victoria Local Council and *Festubru* organised by the Kerċem Local Council. The event *Għawdex f'Kastilja* organised by this Unit at the Auberge de Castille during the Notte Bianca 2009 to promote Gozo as an attractive winter tourism destination for the internal market also served to popularise further the eco-Gozo vision, its importance for sustainable development on Gozo and to expose the potential which the island offers. It is estimated that more than 16,000 visitors attended this event which included a historical exhibition *Treasures of Gozo at the National Library*, a 4-hour classical concert and an exposition of Gozitan craft-making. A publication on Gozo was also distributed during this event.

During 2010, a number of awareness and educational initiatives taken during 2009 are expected to be repeated and new initiatives in this regard will be taken. Particular action is also expected to be taken on projects related to renewable energy and energy efficiency, healthy lifestyles, freshwater conservation, environmental improvements, the promotion of Gozo as a tourism and investment destination, transport, sport, education, natural heritage and afforestation.

JOSEPH SCERRI
Permanent Secretary

Directorate General Operations

FUNCTIONS

The overall objectives of the Directorate General (Operations) are:

- to participate actively in the development and implementation of the Ministry's strategic, operational and resource plans and co-operate with senior staff towards the achievement of the Ministry's goals by sharing resources, providing support and assistance, disseminating information of mutual interest, etc;
- to provide direction to Heads of Directorates, including the Chief Information Officer within the Office of the Permanent Secretary, in the preparation of operational plans to support the Ministry in the implementation of policy directives;
- in liaison with the respective Heads of Directorates, to plan, develop and ensure the implementation of work standards within the Office of the Permanent Secretary to ensure quality, timeliness and cost-effective results;
- to establish and maintain effective channels of communication with client groups, and with other ministries, departments and agencies to enhance the exchange of information and ideas on matters of common interest and to ensure that services and programmes are appropriate to the needs of clients, as well as being compatible and complementary to other service initiatives;
- to co-ordinate the operations and activities of the line departments of the Ministry; and
- to manage the day-to-day operations of the Back Office Unit as well as the Gozo offices of the Land Registry, Public Registry and Notary to Government.

NOTARY TO GOVERNMENT OFFICE

The Office of the Notary to Government in Gozo prepares drafts and publishes deeds to which the Government, including parastatal bodies, are a party.

This office is also responsible for the conservation of Notarial Acts according to law and for their safe-keeping and custody regarding immovables situated in Gozo and Comino. Such acts can be inspected by the public, who can also demand a copy of relevant deeds according to the relevant laws. During the year, 900 individuals requested copies of relevant deeds. Revenue collected during 2009 amounted to €4,154.10.

The majority of Notaries practising in Malta continued to send to this Office copies of deeds published in Malta relating to transfers of immovables situated in Gozo and Comino.

This Office also has a storage room in the Gozo Administration Centre where registers of deeds deposited at this Office are kept.

CIVIL STATUS REPORTING OFFICE

The functions of the Civil Status Reporting Office are to input data regarding birth certificates.

During 2009, the total number of birth certificates inputted was 151,108 (up to register of the year 1904). In addition, 64,496 birth certificates were verified during the same period (up to register of the year 1971).

LAND REGISTRY OFFICE

This section deals with applications regarding the registration of property in Gozo. The following applications were received during the year:

Applications LRAs	1,429
Charges	501
Official searches	812
Site Plans	2,000

Thus, when comparing these figures with the previous five years, there was a decrease in the number of applications as regards first registration but there was an increase in the number of applications for registration of charges (except 2009) and as regards official searches. The number of site plans issued was the same as in previous years.

In 2009, the office started scanning the applications and documents (mostly plans and contracts) attached to the applications. In one year, the Land Registry staff managed to scan documents relating to applications submitted in 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009. When the LRCS system is made accessible on the internet, the general public may have the facility to view these documents without the need to call at the Land Registry. Moreover, the documents are preserved better since, once scanned, the need to view or copy the original document is eliminated as a copy of that document can be obtained electronically.

PUBLIC REGISTRY OFFICE

During the year, 2,372 Notes of Enrolment were registered in this Office, while there were 1,549 notes of Hypothec. Notes of References relating to hypothecs numbered 578 while 41 Legal Hypothecs were registered. The number of Schedules of Deposit relating to redemption of ground-rent of immovables in Gozo and Comino was 29. There were also 27 Warrants of Prohibitory Injunctions and 16 sales by auction (*subbasta*).

The Civil Status Section registered the following acts:

Births	241
Marriages	197
Deaths	291

The number of certificates issued by this same section was:

Extract Certificates	7,243
Full Certificates	212

During 2009 the Marriage Registry processed 198 marriage applications. During the same year there were:

Religious Marriages	154
Civil Marriages	40
Other Religions	1

During 2009, searches regarding transfers and hypothecs, as well as their testamentary searches, were ordered through the Gozo Public Registry but processed by a private company. The costs amounted to €153,412.56 in respect of searches and €7,050.34 in respect of wills. The official searches were delivered through the Public Registry.

SALARIES SECTION (HEALTH DIVISION)

During 2009, the main functions of this section were:

- payment of personal emoluments to the employees working within the Health, Elderly and Community Care Sector of the Ministry for Social Policy. The necessary adjustments to the employees' wages are worked out and inputted via the *Payper*, a computer-based network. The Central Treasury Salaries Department may also be instructed to carry out adjustments such as recruitments, appointments, progressions, termination of contracts, new rosters, etc. The payroll subsequently issued by the Treasury Department is eventually checked in order to ascertain that all adjustments have been effected correctly;
- dealing with queries about employees' salaries as well as the issuing of requested documents such as P3s;
- coordination with the Personnel Section of the Health Division on matters concerning the attendance, transfers, resignations and change in working hours of the employees;
- issuing of reports relative to the Personal Emoluments block on a regular basis; and
- processing of the required payments to governmental and non-governmental entities which provide their services to the Health Division.

SALARIES SECTION (EDUCATION)

As in previous years, this section continued to offer its services to all employees who fall under the Education Division in Malta. Correspondence and communications received by e-mails and telephone calls from the Leaves and Records Sections were dealt with efficiently and amendments were sent to the Treasury Department on time.

Around 734 returns of casual staff were received every four weeks and wage sheets were subsequently issued. Throughout 2009, around 15,306 mid-day break supervision claims were processed and were paid on a quarterly basis. There was an increase in Professional Development claims which amounted to 8,193. New entries, mostly of new teachers and supply teachers and SLSA (Supply Learning Support Assistants) were also taken in hand.

TAS and ESTS students were also paid by this section.

Nine of the section's staff perform teleworking duties. Every four weeks, a report is issued in respect of work done during teleworking hours schedules.

Staff monitored incoming requests for information and complaints and assisted the public with the best service possible. Moreover, staff dealt effectively and efficiently with a large volume of incoming queries and requests which were forwarded by the Ministry and other departments.

SALARIES SECTION (MRRA)

The main function of this Section is to process the salaries including allowances and overtime of all the employees of the Ministry for Resources and Rural Affairs. Correspondence and communications received by e-mails and telephone calls from Leaves and Records Sections were dealt with efficiently and amendments were sent to the Treasury Department on time.

TREASURY SALARIES SECTION

The Treasury Salaries Section is responsible for:

- the proper processing of salary and the timely issue of payrolls thereof;
- the proper maintenance of adequate records of promotions, progressions and appointments of all employees on the government payroll;
- the correct interpretation of the various government collective agreements, MPO and Finance circulars and the Public Service Management Code (PSMC);

- the processing of data supplied by the salaries officers in every department to ensure the timely printing of payroll and cheques;
- the introduction of a new Payroll system in conjunction with the Section's Payroll Administrator (IT System) and the contractors (MITA);
- liaison with MPO on employee relations, rights and grievances; and
- liaison with departments in their day-to-day queries and answering queries from employees and the public in general.

AMENDMENTS AND SALARIES

In 2009, the total amendments in salaries carried out by this section amounted to 85,287 over 13 payments. This amount includes only the inputs done in Form 1, 3, 5, 9.

This section issued 546,635 salaries in 2009 and paid the amount of €431,820,664.83 in salaries and bonuses.

THE TREASURY PENSIONS SECTION

The main responsibility of this section involves the issuing of a pension and gratuity to government employees who have been in continuous service since 15 January 1979, as well as to the Armed Forces of Malta, the Correctional Services and the Police Force employees. The section is also responsible for the issuing of bonus and income supplements to eligible ex-civil service employees who are not receiving a bonus from the Social Security Department.

TREASURY PENSIONER AND GRATUITIES IN 2009

In 2009 there were 351 public service employees who retired and were eligible for a Treasury Pension, bringing the total to 14,651 pensioners. Of these 351, 287 were male and 64 were female. The total of deceased pensioners was 421, of which 363 were male and 60 were female (Table 1).

	New		Deceased	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Jan	59	13	36	6
Feb	38	9	38	4
Mar	20	3	37	5
Apr	35	6	50	6
May	23	8	25	5
Jun	29	7	24	8
Jul	30	3	35	4
Aug	30	1	25	4
Sep	34	4	14	4
Oct	14	5	31	5
Nov	31	1	28	2
Dec	3	17	20	5
Sub Total	346	77	363	58
Total			423	421

In 2009, the total pensions paid amounted to €67,654,330 and the total amount of gratuities paid was €15,321,470.

GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SERVICE SECTION

Service Objectives

The Freephone 153 helpline forms part of the Government Information Service. The helpline provides the general public as well as government entities, information ranging from a simple query, such as the contact details of a particular office, to more complex requests on current government policies.

During 2009, a total of 71,215 calls on Freephone153 were registered by the computerised telephone system. Requests by e-mail averaged four per working day. Average messages recorded after office hours and replied to on the following working day, reached ten queries daily. Updating of the unit's database remained a priority to ensure the availability of a concise and correct source of information. However, for specific queries, the Unit often refers queries directly to government departments and entities particularly on matters that are directly affected by changing policies and laws.

CONSUMER UNIT

The Consumer Unit deals with consumer complaints. The Office provides a freephone service to both the Maltese and Gozitan customers. This enables customers to call at the office to file their complaints free of charge. Moreover this office accepts complaints amounting up to €3,494 only. Complaints which exceed this amount are to be dealt with at the Civil Law Courts. Complaints can also be filed via email by sending the necessary details or else by visiting the Consumer Office in person and providing all the necessary documents in respect of the claim.

Complaints are registered in the Complaints Handling System, where all the details of both the consumer and the trader are registered together with the details of the complaint. The Consumer Office will then mediate between both parties by phone in order to try to reach an amicable agreement. If the mediation results in the negative, the case is then referred to the Tribunal for the Arbiter's final decision, always with the consumer's consent. A sentence is then issued in writing by the Arbiter after he hears both parties during the sitting. If the sentence is not honoured, the case can be referred to the Courts of Malta for a second sentence.

The following is a table showing the number of cases received every month during 2009 through the telephone:

Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
725	982	1,130	1,275	1,348	1,703	1,803	2,109	2,040	2,130	1,969	2,085

Earlier on during the year and with the collaboration of the Consumer and Competition Division in Malta, an exhibition in Victoria was organised, at which the public had the opportunity to put forward any pending queries. Additionally, several leaflets were distributed to the public to keep them updated of the activities and services provided by the section.

ENERGY BENEFIT SECTION

The main functions of this Section are:

- keying in of energy benefit applications which are then assessed and authorised;
- authorising humanitarian cases;
- creating payment adjustments of charitable organisations;
- dealing with PA 109's and call letters forwarded by A/Os;
- carrying out necessary amendments on SABS as regards to EB application details;
- creating arrears/overpayments where applicable;
- providing responses to queries from Social Security Dept., A/Os and SPIC;
- dealing with Benefit Fraud investigation cases;

- dealing with error/warning reports issued with every voucher generation process and
- dealing with MITA regarding the running of the EB system.

The table below gives details of the work performed during 2009:

	Total
Authorised Applications	2,508
Charitable Organisations	353
Humanitarian Authorised	89
BFI Cases	151
PA 109 's Assessed	2,110
PA 109 Authorised	2,135
Overpayments Created	165
Arrears Created	137
Vouchers for Re-dating	1,130
Call Letters	1,327
PA 109	3,696
New Applications	3,438

INLAND REVENUE DEPARTMENT (CALL CENTRE)

The Call Centre's main objective is to answer all incoming telephone and e-mail queries relating to Income Tax and Social Security Contributions. Queries are made by all categories of taxpayers namely individuals, companies, employers and expatriates.

The following table gives an indication of telephone calls, e-mails and correspondence answered by the IRD Call Centre during 2009:

Month	Telephone calls	E-mails	Correspondence
Total	114,863	9,779	3,208

The feedback received through the IRD Call Centre is used to help the Inland Revenue Division to update its policies, procedures and legislation. Through this feedback, the Division's website and any literature issued are also enhanced.

Ongoing training and support are given whenever new procedures or legislation are introduced by the Department. Additional training is also given as deemed necessary. Through this continuous training process, the Call Centre Customer Relations Officers are constantly kept abreast of any changes that occur in order to enable them to reply to the public's queries in the most efficient and correct manner.

MARIO CALLEJA
Director General (Operations)

Corporate Services Directorate

Mission Statement

To provide through the Permanent Secretary a central support service and to co-ordinate the corporate activities of the departments falling under the Ministry for Gozo.

During 2009, the Directorate of Corporate Services (DCS) continued to improve the quality of the support services provided to the other departments and branches of the Ministry for Gozo, particularly in the areas of financial planning and management, human resources management, and office services. The Directorate coordinates the compilation of the Business Plans and Financial Estimates and ensures the timely and accurate preparation of management information. The DCS contributes to the collective management of the Ministry through policy development.

Other works carried out by the department during 2009 were:

- approving advance payments made by the various departments under the Ministry;
- raising financial returns as requested by the Ministry of Finance, the Treasury Department and the National Statistics Office;
- updating monthly returns regarding commitments raised under the various capital projects;
- raising financial information regarding accrual accounting on a quarterly basis;
- raising quarterly returns of suppliers who do not provide the department with a fiscal receipt;
- recording inventory items procured by this Office and making the necessary information available to the departments in order to update their respective asset records;
- vetting requests for the receipt of a 'qualification allowance';
- co-ordinating requests for information made by the central agencies;
- co-ordinating progressions and promotions of staff in the Ministry and line departments;
- facilitating the implementation of central and ministerial policies and initiatives across the Ministry; and
- compiling information related to replies to parliamentary questions.

HUMAN RESOURCES

The Directorate liaised with the various departments to ensure the effective implementation of corporate human resources policies, systems and procedures prescribed by the Management and Personnel Office. It also continued to provide support and assistance to the Ministry's line departments in the recruitment and deployment of human resources. In all, 25 appointments were issued during the year and the Department coordinated the promotion exercise in respect of 22 officers as well as 63 Progressions. The DCS also processed work related to the confirmation of appointment of 15 employees in their respective appointments.

In particular, the Directorate provided support services in the field of human resources management and development. It also ensured conformity with policies, systems and procedures and the provision of data and other information required by central government agencies. As part of its task to ensure the effective implementation of corporate HR policies, systems and procedures, the Directorate continued liaising with the Ministry's other line departments. In this connection, the staff complement of the Ministry was monitored and vacancies were filled according to approvals by MFEI and MPO in accordance with the requirements of the departments.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

During the year, staff development continued to be given a high priority by the Directorate. Training programmes on the following topics were organised, in collaboration with the Staff Development Organisation and other departments, for government employees serving in Gozo, in order to enhance and upgrade their competence level in accordance with today's needs and challenges:

Listening Skills	Supervisory Skills
Waste Management Training Programme	Charts
Risk Management	Mail Merge
MS Excel Advanced	Mail Merge
MS Excel Advanced	All About Tables
MS WORD Advanced	Interpersonal Effectiveness
MS WORD Advanced	Financial Management & Control

COORDINATING ACTIVITIES

During 2009, the DCS took measures to ensure that government services in Gozo were provided in an efficient and effective manner. *Inter alia*, the Directorate was responsible for the coordination of the verification of sick leave availed of by government employees with a view to curbing abuses, on which initiative it maintained a database. During the year, the Directorate asked for 4,603 medical visits to be carried out.

The DCS was also involved in a number of initiatives in accordance with the legal obligations stipulated in the Data Protection Act as well as the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

The Directorate Corporate Services continued to maintain inventory lists, temporarily store and dispose of obsolete, unserviceable and surplus items within the Ministry as provided by the Financial Regulations.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Information systems and information technology related matters fall under the responsibility of the Information Management Unit (IMU) headed by the Chief Information Officer (CIO).

The main activity of the IMU for 2009 was the replacing of all PCs – close to 800 units for 1,000 users – at the Ministry for Gozo. This entailed substantial organisational activity to ensure the smooth operation with minimum downtime and without any loss of service.

Following approval in December 2008, and after a lengthy recruitment process, an ICT Applications Officer commenced his duties on 1 September 2009. The Office of the CIO is now comprised of the CIO, an ICT Applications Officer (one of 4 identified officers) and a secretary.

The requirements for the extension of IHIS (Integrated Health Information Systems) to Gozo General Hospital were determined, and a capital ICT expenditure (CAPEX) project costing over €1 million was compiled and presented to the MITA board. Works are envisaged to commence early in 2010. In addition, premises at GGH were identified to construct a new Gozo Computer Centre to house the necessary equipment associated with the project above and will also house all other government network equipment (currently at the MITA data centre with the Gozo Administration Centre).

The Office of the CIO was actively involved in the centrally administered (core service) procurement and requirements definition process for a government-wide new payroll and HR system. The application will be fully implemented and administered by the Ministry for Gozo, through the back-office Treasury section.

During the year, IT infrastructure and services were expanded and improved. The network (LAN) infrastructure available within many departmental branches has been enhanced and upgraded. This was done through several Local Area Network extension works in several sites including the Cittadella Centre

for Culture and the Arts (Sentinella), the Downtown Hotel premises, the Adult Training Centre, the Gozo General Hospital and the Public Health Section. This involved trunking, cabling and patching works which were carried out both by third party contractors and in-house resources depending on the magnitude of the works.

The Wide Area Network (fibre) connection at the Downtown Hotel new leased premises was commissioned and major LAN works in this location were completed in readiness for the location to take new employees.

Extensive LAN extension works continued in various sections at the administration building enabling the connection of more users via CAT5 cabling to the new PABX. This is to support the other telephone related initiative involving the laying of multi-core cables (GO) connecting the PAPX and the various data cabinets.

These works and the upgraded PABX (with over 200 extensions and two PRA 32-channel digital external lines) resulted in the replacing of 67 analogue direct lines. This represented a substantial improvement in the service complemented with substantial cost savings: €14,880 line rental costs annually plus an unknown cost associated with inter-departmental calls (now free).

New ACAD (architectural design application) network software (five licences) was procured for a total cost of €28,500 following a call for tenders. A total of 11 client applications were installed.

During the year new users were given access to e-mail and internet accounts. At the end of the year, the number of e-mail account users and internet account users were 757 and 176 respectively.

Two videoconferencing sessions were held involving the Gozo and Malta Law Courts and the Honorary Consulate in Turin via Skype.

During the year, the IMU continued to fund and monitor the contracts for the provision of support for technical infrastructure and software applications entered into with MITA and other third party suppliers.

SCHEMES

The Directorate Corporate Services processed 42 applications for special passes submitted by Gozitans who reside in Malta and have either one of their partners or a close relative residing permanently in Gozo.

The Department also administered the scheme for the payment of a monthly accommodation subsidy of €116.47 cents to Gozitan students following University courses in Malta on a full-time basis. 658 University students and 118 College students benefited from this subsidy in 2009. A subsidy of €1.26 cents is also being paid to Gozitan employees with government-funded or government-owned institutions for every day of attendance at their workplace – 3,014 applications were received.

The scheme aimed at giving financial assistance to non-government organisations continued to operate in 2009. 81 Gozitan voluntary organisations have benefited from this scheme which should help them in their endeavours to strengthen the social fabric of the Gozitan community.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

During 2009 the Directorate continued to monitor the expenditure performance under both the Capital and Recurrent Votes of the Ministry for Gozo and kept a constant watch to maintain financial accountability in the Ministry. The DCS was involved in the processing of Gozo Treasury Pensions, stocking and distribution of counterfoil books, accounting for receipts of all government departments in Gozo, and winding up of bank accounts held with the Government Savings Bank. The following figures show revenue/expenditure of the Ministry and the number of Treasury pensioners in Gozo as at end 2009.

Another very important task done by this Section is the DAS consolidated function in Gozo including the vetting and processing of the Ministry's financial transactions and the performance of the cheque run routine. This office also continued to deal with requests from the general public regarding, amongst other things, the division of holdings between the heirs of deceased stock holders, changes of addresses, power of attorney, re-dating of dividend warrants and the application of the 15% Final Withholding Tax on dividends.

Revenue	€
Fees on contracts/Notarial fees	4,503.17
Court Fees	350,499.61
Services rendered to Local Council	42,043.76
Miscellaneous Reimbursement	163.06
Miscellaneous Receipts	22,919.28

Expenditure	
Recurrent	€55,306,353.82
Capital	€4,309,151.73

Treasury Pensions	
Civil	1,069
Police	134
Widows	150
P.I.S.	2
Total	1,355

EMANUEL GRECH
Director (Corporate Services)

Department of Customer Services

INTRODUCTION

The objectives of the Department of Customer Services are:

- to ensure a liaison system among the various operation centres with the objective of improving customer services for the population;
- to ensure proper planning relating to customer services;
- to manage the branches, offices and sections of the Ministry for Gozo which provide a direct service to the public, ensuring that customers are always given a service of high quality;
- to provide a quality Health Service to Gozitans and visitors to Gozo; and
- to coordinate and support initiatives of a cultural and/or social nature taken by NGOs, local councils and other organisations

During 2009, the Department of Customer Services was directly responsible for 23 sections and liaised with the Gozo branches of the Inland Revenue Department, VAT Office and Electoral Office.

EDUCATION OFFICE

Major Achievements of the Gozo College between September and December 2009

At College Level

- De-streaming and team-core-subject teaching (both horizontally and vertically), now in its fourth year, in all primary schools. Re-culturing and ownership by Senior Management Team, teaching personnel, parents and pupils is now complete;
- Inauguration of the college website with links to other school websites;
- Third publication of our College Diary with information about major activities at College and community levels. Inclusion of College homework policy and latest decisions re-Maltese orthography;
- Publication of the first edition of the well-researched Gozo College Journal of Educational Studies, freely distributed to all our teaching personnel;
- Council of Heads meetings, each in a different school, with the inclusion of all private/church schools;
- An extensive three-pronged, completely free-of-charge after-school programme: (a) revision classes for Year 6 pupils, where past papers are revisited through drama and Information and Communication Technology by a Year 6 teacher; (b) ICT classes leading to ECDL: more than 250 students are attending this year; (C) Homework-cum-activity classes in all schools: one-hour homework followed by one-hour activity by fully-fledged teachers;
- Deployment of caretakers according to a roster system;
- Continuous professional development meetings for all primary and secondary schools on professional issues;
- Launch of Award for Entrepreneurship at College Level: best efforts will be rewarded and exhibited later on as part of the closure of Year for Innovation and Creativity;
- Work in partnership with Eco-Gozo.

At School Level

- Acquisition of Green Flag by Gozo College Xewkija Primary;
- Launch of Learning Zone in our secondary schools;
- Reggio Comenius Project in conjunction with a local council, the first of its kind;
- Music option in Forms One;
- Successful re-deployment of three ex-peripatetic, PE teachers;
- ILWIEN: a fantastic project at Gozo College Girls' Secondary in conjunction with the Dar Guzeppa Debono, University of Malta and all Gozitan local councils with substantial EU funding;
- Inauguration of Hall at Gozo College Sannat Primary with part funding by Rotary Malta; new amenities include very costly, sophisticated apparatus for children with special needs;
- Seminar for Learning Support Assistants coordinated by Inclusion Co-Ordinator;
- INWAR by Foundation For Educational Services is offered for all needing it at Gozo College Victoria Primary.

At Parents/Community Levels

- Visibility, participation and contribution by College Principal and staff in local radio transmissions in educational programmes;
- Regular, after school meetings of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and Dyslexia support groups for parents of children needing our professional help;
- Very close work with the Gozitan Cultural Committee: co-organisation of Gozo Day and Gozo College Day celebrations.

Education Office

The Education Office in Gozo also offers a wide range of services to the Gozo College schools (state schools), church schools, and to the three special schools namely the Art School, School of Music and Drama School. Pupils and the public in general were offered various services.

The following construction, refurbishment and maintenance works were completed:

Agius de Soldanis - Lift
 Gharb Primary - Hall Apertures
 Gharb Primary - Entrance Apertures
 Kercem Primary - Refurbishment of Corridors
 Kercem Primary - Playroom
 Nadur Primary - Refurbishment of Yard
 Nadur Primary - Roof Replacement
 Qala Primary - Non-slip tiling for Corridors
 Qala Primary - New Rooms under ITS
 Sannat Complex - Sanitary Facilities
 Sannat Complex - Hall: Total Overhaul inc. lift platform and stage lighting; redecoration and sanitary facilities.
 Sir MA Refalo - New Entrance
 Sir MA Refalo - Lift
 Sir MA Refalo - Swivel Chairs for Computer Lab
 Victoria Primary - Non-slip tiling for Corridors
 Victoria Primary - Lift
 Zebbug Primary - Non-slip tiling for Corridors
 Gozo Primary - Upholstered Chairs for School Halls

- The Literacy Centre was further equipped with books and periodicals and all schools could make use of its resources throughout the whole scholastic year.
- Peripatetic teachers posted at the Education Office continued to offer their services to all primary schools.
- The YSO section in our office is responsible for the holding of adult Education Courses in Gozo. Evening classes in a number of subjects both at Ordinary and Advanced level were offered. This unit also provides the necessary support for the organisation of the Children's Carnival, and other extra curricular activities. The YSO Section is also responsible for the organisation of visits by students from primary schools to the Environmental Centre at Lunzjata.

- Hands on Farming section continued to give regular programmes for all Gozitan Schools and there were also visits by schools from Malta.

EXAMINATIONS CENTRE

The Examinations Centre in Gozo is responsible for the running of all local and external examinations held in Gozo. During the year, the Centre handled the following work:

- *Applications (Local, Matriculation and External Examinations)*: the following applications were received: 629 Matsec May, 242 Matsec September, 15 London January, 294 Ordinary May, 228 Matric May, 153 Matric September, 7 LCCI Series 3, 1 LCCI Series 4, 24 English as a Foreign Language, 28 Wireman Licence A & B, 59 Regular Soldiers in AFM, 12 Foreign University Degrees, 18 Messengers in the MPS and 229 Clerks in the MPS. On average there were over 24,000 examination sittings. All applications vetted and acknowledged, and relevant invoices issued through this office.
- *Online Applications*: During November, staff from the Centre visited Agius de Soldanis Girls Junior Lyceum and Ninu Cremona Boys Junior Lyceum to supervise fifth formers applying for their Sec examinations online in their school's computer labs. Due to this initiative, over 500 students applied online in Gozo.
- *Examination Sessions*: There were over 450 examination sessions (External, Matriculation and Local Examinations). When the number of candidates was more than 40, outside help was sought by engaging invigilators from other departments to ensure the smooth running of the examinations in session.
- *Certificates*: Over 1,300 certificates were received for distribution to successful students who had sat for the London, ECDL, Degrees and London Chamber of Commerce examinations.
- *Information*: Information is provided regarding the various local, Matsec and external examinations to the hundreds of students who call at the Centre. Examination timetables, syllabuses, results, applications and other related data are also available for ease of reference. In October, various lectures were held in the secondary schools (to Fifth form students and their parents) to familiarise students with examination procedures.
- *ECDL Examinations*: For the 7th year running this section has been nominated to co-ordinate the European Computer Driving Licence examinations.
- *English as a Foreign Language*: Two sessions of this examination (first session was held in November 2004) were held at the centre. Around 27 sat for these papers.

CULTURE SECTION

Administration

During the past year, the principal efforts of the Culture Section were the following:

- continuation of the restructuring of the administrative set up at the Gozo Culture Office to assure maximum output of each of the section's employees;
- initial framework and draft document following a series of public consultations to establish a *Cultural and Regional Policy for Gozo* and a change in role of the Gozo Cultural Council from an event organiser to a policy coordinator;
- close collaboration with Gozitan local councils and others;
- cultural entities on the island to consolidate an Annual Cultural Calendar for Gozo;
- a continuous programme of cultural activities at the Cittadella; and
- Centre for Culture & Arts as a means for innovation and to promote creativity as well as a cultural space for artistic expressions of all genres;

Organisation of Activities

During 2009, the Culture Section was responsible for the organisation of the following activities:

- the commemoration of five annual National Festivities, together with the 30th October 1948 tragedy anniversary and the commemoration of victims of the two world wars in November (better known as Poppy Day); the *Jum Ghawdex* celebration was celebrated on 24 October in collaboration and with full participation of the Gozo College;
- a series of artistic evenings organised as part of the Gran Castello Summer Nights at the Cittadella, Gozo during July and September, which events were very well received by those present;
- three days of packed activities, coordinated by a group set from the Ministry for Gozo as part of the *Notte Gozitana 2009*;
- around 36 art exhibitions held in collaboration with Gozitan, Maltese or foreign artists at the exhibition venues at the Ministry for Gozo, the Banca Giuratale foyer and the Cittadella Centre for Culture and Crafts;
- a Christmas concert held at the Ministry Hall. The concert presided by HE the President of the Republic was conducted by Mro Mark Gauci with the participation of the *Island Brass*. The Subsidy Scheme for Static and Mechanical cribs attracted 31 participants.

Carnival 2009

A total of three triumphal floats, King Carnival and four tractors, three musical bands, two sets of grotesque masks, two dance groups, nine school companies, four hilarious companies, nine individual costumes, and two individual costume with grotesque mask took part in the Gozo 2009 Regional Carnival which was celebrated between 14 and 24 February 2009. For the first time, the regional programme was also organised and included all local carnivals organised in Gozitan villages by their respective local councils.

Grants

Besides thousands of euros being distributed in the form of help by the Gozo Cultural Council to local artists, musicians, actors and crib builders, the Ministry for Gozo kept its annual commitment with the two Gozo opera theatres. A grant of €17,470 was given to each theatre as a subsidy towards the expenses involved in organising the annual opera performances. Part of the grant was given through the Gozo Attractions Incentive Scheme.

GOZO PUBLIC LIBRARIES

The Gozo Public Libraries network consists of the Gozo Public Library, the Gozo Lending Library and 12 Local Branch Libraries including one at the Gozo General Hospital. The Gozo Public Library's dual role is to acquire and preserve for prosperity the national collection of printed material and to provide academic books and other related material in printed and electronic form for research. The Gozo Lending Library and the Local Branch Libraries provide educational information and recreational books for home reading.

Bibliographic Section

The launching of e-libraries is a step forward in the quality of services offered to the general public. All persons with access to Internet have the facility to access the Library catalogues. It is definitely a useful electronic tool for the retrieval of information.

Collections

- *Legal Deposits*: The Melitensia collection was enriched with 496 books, besides the local newspapers and periodicals that are received regularly in terms of the Legal Deposit Act of 1925. These are bound in volumes at the bookbinders section of the Gozo Public Library.

- **New acquisitions:** The sum of €8,434 was spent on the acquisition of 1,219 new books (642 for the Gozo Public Library and the Gozo Lending Library, 577 for the Local Branch Libraries). The sum of €597.74 was spent on subscriptions of foreign magazines, which are made available for consultation at the Gozo Public Library.
- **Donations:** 2,536 books were donated by various persons and entities: 218 to the Gozo Public Library, 100 books to the Gozo Lending Library, and 2,218 to the Local Branch Libraries.

Readers' Services

Internal Circulation

The main objective of the readers' services at the Gozo Public Library is to promote a user friendly library by offering a personalised service in delivering to researchers all relevant material in their research.

- *Research service:* 2,792 researchers requested a total number of 8,028 items for their research – broken down as follows: 1,830 newspapers; 2,928 Melitensia books; 1,220 academic books; 858 periodicals; 13 manuscripts and 1,179 other items (which include government publications, past exam papers and material from the projects' section).
- *Photocopying services:* 1,949 persons requested a total number of 25,184 prints at the Gozo Public Library. This yielded an income of €3,284. All prints were made available on the same day of request.
- *Internet service:* 7,966 persons availed themselves of the Internet Service (Gozo Public Library – 2,644 persons; Gozo Lending Library – 5,352 persons). All Internet PCs were replaced with new ones.
- *New members:* 547 persons requested to borrow books for home reading (Gozo Lending Library – 118 adults/127 juniors; Local Branch Libraries – 127 adults/175 juniors).
- *Book loans:* A total of 119,014 books were issued for home reading (Gozo Lending Library – 57,784; Local Branch Libraries – 61,230). This marks an increase of 1,273 over the previous year.

Publicity and Promotion

- *Library orientation visits:* During the scholastic year, 784 students together with their respective teachers paid an orientation visit to the Gozo Public Library. On several occasions, students were accompanied by their parents as well. Students' participation included reading of extracts from their own works and recital of poems. An exhibition of new books was put on display on each visit. These visits were organised in collaboration with the Gozo College. Besides members of the National Council of Women, a group of 10 Dutch educators and 13 librarians from Germany, Latvia, Italy, Lithuania, Norway and Turkey paid a visit to the Gozo Public Library to acquaint themselves with the services and facilities that are being offered.
- *Storytelling:* One-hour storytelling sessions are held every Wednesday afternoons at the Gozo Lending Library. A total of 171 primary school students attended in 2009

Exhibitions

- *World Book Day 2009:* In collaboration with the Literacy Unit within the Gozo College, World Book Day was commemorated with two activities, namely with an exhibition of over 1,000 new books and a literacy activity. The new books, covering a variety of subjects are addressed towards the recreational, educational and academic needs of the general public ranging from primary to tertiary levels.
- *Lejlet Lapsi:* The 3rd edition of Lejlet Lapsi was celebrated in Gozo on 22, to 24 May 2009. The Gozo Public Library opened its door to the general public on Saturday, 23 May 2009. An exhibition of new books earmarked for the Gozo Public Library, the Gozo Lending Library and Local Branch Libraries was put on display.

- *Publicity campaign*: Besides these activities, as a means of publicity to keep the general public aware of the services offered at the Gozo Public Libraries, interviews were held on the broadcasting media complemented by press coverage.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Introduction

The NAG is the public record office for the documentation produced and received by past and present government departments and establishments of the islands of Gozo and Comino.

Act V (2005) *The National Archives Act* enacted by the Parliament of Malta on 10 May 2005 laid out the constitution, the composition, and the functions of the National Archives establishing it as an entity or agency in its own right. It also made provisions for the appointment of a National Archivist and an Assistant National Archivist for Gozo together with other dispositions ancillary thereto.

The NAG is a sub-agency within the National Archives. As such, the National Archives Gozo, as the Agency, is the *regulator*; the Ministry of Gozo is the *administrator*. The NAG, up to 31 December 2008, held deposits from 25 different entities, each of which is subdivided to reflect the diverse activity carried out by those entities. A new entity, the Passport Office, was added during 2009.

Tasks

The Assistant National Archivist and his assistants carry out the following tasks:

- management of the archives – a most important task for the preservation of the national memory of the Maltese nation;
- carrying out of visits to government establishments to make an appraisal of the documents preserved therein. During 2009, on-the-spot checks were carried out at the Gozo General Hospital and at the Gozo Passport Office where a number of registers were identified for transfer from the entities to the NAG;
- cataloguing of documents transferred to the Archives, which task takes up most of the time as the majority of documents are transferred to the NAG without any pre-established order. The analysis of the oldest section of the Archives, the records of the old *Universitas*, the regional government of Gozo during the rule of the Knights (1530-1798), continues;
- making the general public conscious of this written memory of the Maltese nation. In this regard, the Assistant National Archivist proceeded with the publication of a document every month from the registers of the *Universitas*, the oldest section of the NAG. It is serialised in the monthly magazine *Il-Hajja f'Ghawdex*, a Gozo magazine for local consumption, under the designation *Ghawdex tliet mit sena ilu – Gozo three hundred years ago*. The series will be retained for the nineteenth consecutive year. Up to December 2009, 178 documents had been transcribed, translated, and published with an explanation. Besides, two exhibitions were held in 2009 to make the general public aware of this heritage.

International Fora

The Assistant National Archivist, during 2009, represented the National Archives in the following international meetings

- the first meeting of WP5 - Workpackage 5 of the project codenamed APENet - Archives Portal Europe (Brussels, 3 June). APENet is a Best Practice Network project supported by the European Commission in the *eContentplus programme* and its objective is to build an Internet Gateway for Documents and Archives in Europe where 12 European National Archives, in close cooperation with the [EUROPEANA](#) initiative, will create a common access point to European archival descriptions and digital collections. WP 5 is about dissemination and awareness. The Assistant National Archivist spoke about the part that Malta could play in this regard. He also referred to the CITRA conference to be held in Malta in November and

extended an invitation to the Chair of WP 5 to set up a stand so as to help in the dissemination of APEnet. The Chair accepted the invitation;

- the first General Assembly of the APEnet project held at the Regional Archives, Lund, Sweden on 12 October. The meeting was chaired by the project manager of the States Archives Administration (Spain). The 12 National Archives involved were represented, together with Belgium that has now joined the project. The Archivist spoke about the work being undertaken by Malta in the preparation of the archival descriptions and in the augmentation of its digital collections. The participants were updated on the work that has been done in the APEnet Technical Programme;
- the 20th EBNA meeting – the European Board of National Archivists held at the Akademiska Föreningen, Lund, Sweden (13-14 October). The Director General of the Swedish National Archives chaired the meeting. Participants were given an informative talk on Private Archives in Scandinavia – history and overview of the present situation by the Head of the Department for Private archives at the Swedish National Archives. The Head of Education and Outreach, at the UK National Archives spoke on the education programmer, the outreach projects, and the online expertise used by his unit for the promotion of archives;
- 7th general meeting of the EAG – the European Archives Group – held at the Akademiska Föreningen, Lund, Sweden (14 October). The meeting discussed a software program that may be of great help so that the rich archives of Europe would one day be more available. A number of future challenges were also discussed.
- a familiarisation visit at the National Archives of Sweden in Stockholm (16 October), where ee was shown round the premises, and familiarised himself with the state-of-the-art organisation of the archives and its day-to-day running;
- CITRA - the *Conférence Internationale de la Table Ronde des Archives*, held in Malta (15-21 November). The conference was under the chairmanship of the International Council on Archives, and the National Archivist of Malta. The Assistant National Archivist was a member of the organising committee. The theme of the conference was *Imagining Archiving in the twenty first century: New strategies for education and training*. Close to 250 delegates from 91 different countries took part.

New Deposits

During the year 2009, the NAG was enriched with new items in the following Fonds:

- *AG Archives Gozo (National Archives – Gozo section)*: Items were added in the following sections: AG/01 - Correspondence (1 vol); AG/04 - Exhibition Catalogues (1 vol); AG/05 - Miscellanea (10 vols).
- *CP Circulars and Posters*: Items were added in section CP/03 - Posters (1 vol).
- *LC Local Councils*: Items were added in the following sections: LC/01 – Victoria (1 vol); LC/04 – Għarb (1 vol); LC/11 – Ta' Sannat (1 vol); LC/13 - Xewkija (1 vol).
- *MG Ministry for Gozo*: One new section was added: MG/04 Subsidy to Gozo-Resident Government Workers/Students (7 vols).
- *PA Photographs. Albums*: Items were added in the following sections: PA/01 - Historic Places and Events 1 vol); PA/02 – Albums (2 vols); PA/04 - Ministry of Gozo - Miscellaneous (2 vols).
- *PM Plans and maps*: Items were added in the following section: PM/02 – Village Plans (1 vol).
- *PO Passport Office*: This is a new Fond with one new section: PO/01 – Applications for Malta Passports (Gozo) (168 vols).
- *PW/04 Public Works*: These items/volumes deposited in this Fond years ago were catalogued in 2009 and placed in 14 new sections: PW/04 - Country property-Gozo (35 items); PW/05 - Projects (116 items); PW/06 - Surveys (22 vols); PW/07 - PAPB-Planning Area Permit Board (18 vols); PW/08 - Permission Books (12 vols); PW/09 - Aesthetics Board (18 vols); PW/10 - Estimates and Accounts (14 vols); PW/11 - Impressed cars and transport (9 vols); PW/12 - Tenders (13 vols); PW/13 - Supplies (7 vols); PW/14 -

Reports (8 vols); PW/15 - War Books (34 vols); PW/16 - Muster rolls (27 vols); PW/20 - Miscellanea (30 vols).

- *SS State Schools*: Items were added in the following sections: SS/15 – Għasri/Admission-Attendance-Log-Books (4 vols); SS/16 – Għasri/Miscellanea (25 vols); SS/31 – Xewkija/Admission etc (14 vols).
- *ZM Miscellanea*: Items were added in the following section: ZM/01 - Misc volumes (46 items); New from number ZM/01/284; A new section has been created: ZM/04 – Misc Papers of Ġużeppi Cassar (1877-1961) (14 vols).

Three notes to the above are necessary:

⁽¹⁾ The new fond PO is made up of the passport applications processed in Gozo since the opening of the Passport Office in Gozo in May 1988. These files had to be transferred in compliance with the Data Protection Act.

⁽²⁾ The new section ZM/04 in the fond ZM has been created after miscellaneous papers belonging to the late Ġużeppi Cassar (1877-1961), a poet, were donated to the NAG. This is the first such donation to the NAG.

⁽³⁾ Another donation to the NAG was made by the President of the Malta Study Circle in Watford, with the assistance of the Malta High Commission, London. This consisted of an (incomplete) set of *Malta Government Gazette* (from 1887 to 1970).

During 2009, a total of 301 volumes/items were deposited at the NAG and catalogued; besides, another 363 items/volumes in the PW Fond deposited years ago were catalogued in 2009 and placed in 14 new sections. This means that a total of 664 volumes/items were transferred and/or catalogued during the year, a net increase on those of the previous year (402). It must be noted that each single item in the ZM fond had to be examined and newly bound.

Researchers and Accessions

The number of researchers at the NAG during 2009 decreased to 221 from 288 (2008). As a result, the number of items consulted also decreased to 880 from 1,145 (2008). Notwithstanding, the number of research hours increased to 363 from 283 (2008). This means that the effective use of the deposits at the NAG during 2009 increased by over 28%. The volumes handled throughout the year amounts to about 9% of the NAG holdings, which are on a continuous increase. The following table shows the number of accessions from each section:

AG	CG	GB	MG	MH	PA	PD	
1	15	2	2	113	231	77	
PM	PW	SG	SS	ST	UG	ZM	Total
33	3	49	24	238	16	76	880

Exhibitions

During 2009, the NAG-Gozo mounted two exhibitions:

- The first was held on 23 May 2009 to coincide with *Lejlet Lapsi • Notte Gozitana* – the Gozitan version of *Notte Bianca*. The exhibition, mounted within the premises of the National Archives, was designated *Ħitan tas-Sejjieħ: The dry-stone or rubble walls of Gozo*. It consisted of 40 first class large photographs depicting the most interesting dry-stone walls of Gozo. The exhibition was sponsored by the Ministry for Gozo.
- The second exhibition, held on the occasion of the Archive Awareness Week, featured *Herbs, health, and Hospitals of Gozo Past*. It was open from 1 to 17 October, but this period was eventually extended. The exhibition highlighted these three related aspects of the history of Gozo in three sections. Through a selection of documents, etchings, plans, and historic photos held by the National Archives, the visitor was regaled with a journey through the medical vicissitudes of Gozo past. On the occasion of the official inauguration, a set of sixteen designs of Fort Chambray were presented to the National Archives.

An exhibition catalogue, published for the occasion and containing detailed information on the NAG and the exhibits, was sponsored by HSBC (Gozo). This catalogue in English was also placed on the NAG webpage. A souvenir postcard (No 3), depicting the *Gherq Sinjur* or Gozo Fungus, the most prized medicinal herb of Gozo, was issued for the occasion. The exhibition attracted locals and foreigners, and was also visited by school children.

Webpage

The webpage of the National Archives Gozo Section is hosted by the Ministry for Gozo at <http://www.gozo.gov.mt>. The NAG is now also at <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.mt> – the official website of the National Archives launched on 16 November 2009. The website will soon make it possible for browsers to purchase services offered by the NAG online. The webpage is attracting an increasing number of web browsers.

GOZO SPORTS COMPLEX

The main objectives of the Gozo Sports Complex for 2009 were to:

- encourage young athletes to practice sports
- assist Sport Associations in the organization of sport activities
- provide a wide range of services and to develop the venue into a sports centre with state of the art sport facilities

During 2009, sporting activities at the Gozo Sports Complex were on a regular basis. Sports disciplines such as Basketball, Volleyball, the five-a-side football (Futsal), Table and Lawn Tennis, Squash, Karate, Spirit Combat, Kendo and Akido were organized mainly through Gozitan Sport Associations. Dancing sessions, Hip-Hop, Breakdance, Line-dancing, Gymnastics and Ballet classes were also organised by private tuition throughout the year. Physical Education teachers in secondary state schools used the Complex for their PE lessons. Annual Sports Day activities by several private and state schools were also held. The Gozo College hosted two distinguished activities during 2009 – The Multi Lingual Cultural activity and the Year 6 primary schools graduation ceremony. For both occasions, Gozo's primary school students population attended besides their parents and distinguished guests. In February, the OASI Foundation kept the annual appointment to organise its fund raising activity at the Gozo Sports Complex. The EF Language school Malta, also made use of the Complex during July and August. Foreign students attended daily at the Complex and practised various sport disciplines.

Tournaments

Events hosted by the Gozo Sports Complex during 2009, climaxed in September when an International Kendo Seminar was organised by the Kendo (Malta) Federation in collaboration with the Ministry for Gozo and the Gozo Sports Complex. For this event, the top Japanese Sensai together with around 100 athletes from around the world attended the three day event. As regards Martial Art, in May the Gozo Sports Complex organised the third edition of the Martial Arts Festival, where several promising young athletes were graded into higher grades. Also in October, a Karate seminar was organised with the participation of international and local athletes. In addition, the Complex was once again used as the home venue for the annual Football Tournament organised by the SK Victoria Wanderers, the Badminton and the Tackwondo Tournaments.

Classes

The initiative taken by the Complex in collaboration with the Health Promotion Unit/Gozo General Hospital to organise fitness classes in Pilates, Aerobics, Body Tonification and Fitness continued during 2009. Three eight-week long courses were organised during 2009 and attendance was of around 40 participants in each course. On general request, it is the intention of the administration of the Gozo Sports

Complex to continue organising these courses and also introduce other initiatives to promote healthy life styles through sports.

Cultural Activities

The Sports Complex is the centre for community activities, besides its primary sport functions. During 2009, the venue hosted various cultural activities, like the Gozo Bird Breeders Bird show. In May, the Gozo Sports Complex participated in the Notte Gozitana celebrations and in the Healthy Village activities organised by the Victoria Local Council.

Skolasport

Skola sports entered into its eleventh consecutive season, offering 15 different sport disciplines to school children every Saturday from November to May. A new sport discipline was introduced this year – Dance Aerobics, the response for which was very encouraging. Although the number of students attending Skola sports 2009/10 amounted to 225 students, the administration of the Complex is investing in new equipment and other initiatives to attract more student participation in Skola Sport. A new initiative introduced in 2009 was the organisation of sport-orientated visits to sport facilities in Gozo. In fact students attended for a day visit to the Shooting Range in Zebbug where a demonstration in Archery and Clay shooting were made by professional instructors.

Initiatives

Besides the restructuring of the administration set-up to assure the maximum output of each of the section's employees, the human resource capacity at the Gozo Sports Complex was utilised to continue in the refurbishment process. The new gym was completed and will be inaugurated in 2010. New fitness machinery, lockers and a CCTV system were installed for the supervision of the new area. During summer 2009, extensive works on the drainage system of the Complex were made, besides the maintenance work and polishing of the parquet flooring of the main hall of the Complex. The lower floor of the Complex was refurbished in 2009. Works included the laying of floor tiles, new showers, new sanitary equipment, doors, new plumbing and electrical installation, and other turnkey needs.

LAND SECTION

The main functions of this Section are the following:

- Information regarding rents of the Government Property Division for property in Gozo.
- This section provides services to customers, including the option of looking up information in our records and in site plans, and referring to other records and communicating with Department of Lands, Malta. Representation in Courts with regard to legal cases is also undertaken by the section.
- Since June 2009, this section has been holding weekly sessions for the drawing up and signing of new contracts regarding new tenants in connection with the applications by farmers for the registration of land.

SOCIAL HOUSING OFFICE

The objectives of the Social Housing Office – Gozo are:

- to provide social accommodation to needy families;
- to assist financially owner-occupiers to upgrade their housing standards; and
- to encourage married and engaged couples to become owners of their own place of abode

During 2009, the number of new applications received, and the subsidies paid, were as follows:

Scheme	Details	Applications	Amount Paid €
-	Alternative Accommodation	24	0
K,P,Q	Ground Rent Redemption	1	0
R	Rent Subsidisation	22	20,684
W	Adaptation Works – Government Dwellings (Scheme closed during 2009)	6	11,605
Z	Cash Grants/Loan Subsidy/Owner Occupied Private Dwellings (Scheme closed during 2009)	5	17,259
I	Adaptation Works – Government/Private Dwellings occupied by tenants (New scheme)	6	0
5	Adaptation Works – Leased Dwellings (Scheme closed during 2009)	0	19,922
7	Adaptation Works – Handicapped Persons (Scheme closed during 2009)	0	5,364
GFR	Grants First Residence (VAT Subsidy) *	46	164,762
GALR	Grant Assistance Loan Repayments	4	0
-	Adaptation Works on Allocation of Government Premises	2	10,262
Total		116	294,858

*Paid by VAT Department

During the year, 50 requests were received from tenants at Taċ-Ċawla Housing Estate, for repairs and maintenance works. Many of these works were approved and carried out during the same period, by workers from the Gozo Works Division, and the Housing Construction and Maintenance Department

In February 2009, a maisonette at Xewkija ta' Gokk was issued under Notice 74. Two applications were received for this maisonette.

INFORMATION OFFICE

The Information Office's function is to provide an effective information link between the public administration and the general public. A total of 60 press releases were issued in 2009, most of them accompanied either by photographs and/or video clips.

The Office is also responsible for the sale of all government publications, the major publication being the Government Gazette. The trend in decrease in sales of the Government Gazette continued to manifest itself even during the past year. It has become quite evident now that more and more people are opting to view the gazette online rather than acquiring a hard copy.

The Department also continued to fulfil another important function - that of serving as a point of retrieval and submission of E111, E112 and scholarships forms for their eventual transmission to the competent ministries for processing.

PASSPORT OFFICE

The aim of the passport office is to provide the necessary services relative to the issue of passports. During the year, 1,942 new passports for adults and children were issued from this office.

Other services that are offered to the general public include:

- issuing of collective passports;
- issuing of identity documents not otherwise provided for in lieu of a passport;
- oaths for lost passports;
- Arabic translation on a Maltese passport;
- applications for an electronic identity card;
- provision of information to persons enquiring about dual citizenship.

Notifications of new births and deaths were also dealt with at this office. During the year, 242 births and 269 deaths were received. Such notifications are then referred to the Public Registry for registration.

As of January 2009 any relative of a deceased person has to call at our Office to fill in a Notification Form, to ensure that Death Acts are issued with the correct details.

In accordance with Act V (2005) of the National Archives Act, all passport applications received from 1988 to 1998 have been deposited at the Gozo Section of the National Archives. A detailed list of all applications was kept at this office.

LICENSING AND TESTING OFFICE

New Vera System

During 2009 this Section experienced numerous changes that automatically affected the daily services offered. Towards the beginning of the year, there was a substantial influx of used EU imported vehicles. Numerous inspections on such vehicles were carried out in Gozo up to June 2009. Registration of these vehicles with local plates then followed in Malta. However, inspections for both Gozo and Malta residents are now being carried out only at the Technical Unit Section ADT Malta. Throughout the year, the Section continued to offer the best services possible to its numerous customers on both NEW VERA and DLS systems. Transactions on NEW VERA include:

- Transfers of Ownership
- Transfers by Inheritance
- Garaging & De-Garaging of Self-Drive & Private vehicles
- Conversions from One Public Service Garage to another (PSG to PSG)
- Conversions from Self-Drive to Private & Plate re-generation
- Plate re-issue; Personal VRN, Generic VRN, loss, damaged & stolen Plates
- Conversions of all vehicles mainly; from truck to HIAB truck, refrigerated truck, curtain sided, change of colour, seating, change of engines and discrepancies from VRT Stations
- Scrapping of vehicles
- Part 3 Registration for Motor Dealers
- Help-Desk information on both systems for both Police stations and numerous clients including foreigners
- Collection of plates, driving licences and other documentation.

Driving Licence System

The Driving Licence system that was introduced also in Gozo towards the end of 2007 is now functioning fully. Daily services offered through this system are mainly the booking of new applicants and scheduling of test dates. Since mid-June 2009, apart from the normal once weekly driving tests for Gozo applicants, driving tests are also being carried out on Saturdays depending on demand. The exchange of driving licences for foreigners residing in Gozo greatly improved during the past year. The processing of such licences is now being completely performed at this section by sending direct faxes or e-mails to European countries. This improved the services offered with minimal time delay. The following transactions were processed:

Exchange of Licences	47
Inclusions	149
Licence renewals	1,944
New Driving Licences	429

TRADE OFFICE

This Office offers to the public the same activities which are normally offered at the Commerce Department in Malta, which include issuing of import and export licences. Trading licences for manufacture activities, wholesale and retail activities, construction services, professional and business services, social and personal services and also street hawker licences are also received at this office and referred to the Commerce Department in Malta, while trademark applications are referred to the Industrial Property Office in Malta. Additionally this office deals with MFSA registry of companies. This includes registration of new companies, receiving fees and documents which may be required for the running of a registered company.

Throughout 2009 the following activities were undertaken:

Import Licences	08
Export Licences	02
Trading Licence applications	123
Trademarks	15
MFSA New companies	08
Annual General Meeting (AGM)	395
Companies update	436

TA' DBIEGI CRAFTS VILLAGE

During the year under review, work on the construction of new workshops continued at Ta' Dbiegi Crafts Village. In fact, a new workshop opened for business. On the other hand the majority of the workshops opened to the public. To keep this place attractive, the trees and shrubs were regularly trimmed and flower plants were planted all year round.

GOZO GENERAL HOSPITAL

Gozo General Hospital has a total bed complement of 291 distributed as follows: Acute Wards - 104 beds; Geriatric Wards - 121 beds; Psychiatric Wards - 54 beds; Nursery Cots - 12. The total staff complement at the end of the year consisted of 680 full-time workers, eight part-time workers and two casual substitute.

Major Works Carried Out

During 2009, the following works were undertaken:

- *Refurbishment of the Radiology Department Extension* - Works in connection with the electrical, mechanical and related finishing details of the Radiology Department Extension, which is the first phase of the set up of a new Radiology Unit, were completed. The second phase is expected to be taken in hand once the tender for the procurement of the radiology equipment is awarded and the proposed equipment layout is submitted by the manufacturer.
- *Refurbishment of the CCU* - Works consisted in the removal of the asbestos false ceiling, replacement of hot and cold water distribution pipe work, upgrading of the electrical system, installation of a new nurse call and fire alarm system, telephone, television and IT services, an internal IT backbone, plastering and painting, replacement of apertures with aluminium ones, installation of a new false ceiling, replacement of the vinyl flooring and the installation of an air-conditioning system. Monitors and beds donated by the CCU Foundation were installed.
- *Replacement of vinyl flooring at the Physiotherapy Department* - The vinyl sheeting was replaced and redecoration and other minor refurbishment works were also carried out.
- *Removal of asbestos false ceiling* - The asbestos false ceiling at the Operating Theatre, adjoining corridors, and other small parts were removed and a new false ceiling installed.

- *Extension of the medical gases system at the Paediatric Ward* - The oxygen system was extended and the ward supplied with medical air system.
- *Ventilation system at the Male and Female General Wards* - The isolation rooms at the Male and Female General Wards were provided with a negative pressure ventilation system to cater for contagious cases.

General Statistical Information

- The average number of beds occupied was 214.06 or 73.56%.
- The average length of stay in hospital (excluding the chronic ward) was 4.21 days per person.
- The average turnover, that is, the mean number of patients that have occupied any one bed during 2007/9 was 21.07 patients.
- The average turnover interval, that is, the mean time (in days) that a hospital bed was left empty between successive patients was 3.22 days (when chronic wards are excluded).

	Admissions	Population
Male Ward	2,071	8,802
Female Ward	1,949	9,394
Male Geriatric Ward	0	11,844
Female Geriatric Ward	6	28,443
Paediatric Ward	338	706
Maternity Ward	272	1,026
Coronary Care Unit	444	882
Nursing	251	983
Gynae Ward	445	2,181
Long Stay Ward	51	10,771
Short Stay Ward	312	3,099
Total	6,139	78,131

Attendance of Patients

Out-patients		43,399
New Cases	11,542	
Follow-ups	31,857	
Emergency and Admitting Department		15,544
Admitted to wards	4,716	
Transferred to MDH	30	
Discharged to home or Out-Patients or are deceased	10,798	
Fresh Trauma Clinic Patients		1,405
New cases	1,098	
Follow-ups	189	
Failed to answer	118	
Physiotherapy (treatment sessions)		26,356
Out-Patients	7,979	
In-Patients	18,377	
Occupational Therapy (patients)		459
Treatment Sessions		8,604
Speech Therapy (treatment sessions)		4,575
Out-Patients	194	
In-Patients	57	
Obstetrics (registered deliveries) (243 infants)		241
Renal Unit (treatment sessions)		910
Podology (patients) (new cases - 371)		5,618
Blood donation (donors)		1,661
Male	1,071	
Female	590	
Acupuncture Clinic		879
New cases	145	

Operations Performed

	Minor	Major	Major +	Intermediate	Complex Major	Total
Endoscopies	211	9		391		611
Surgical	425	68	6	210	10	719
Gynaecology	231	167		42		440
Pacemakers		15				15
Orthopaedic	22	34	61	78		195
Ophthalmic	34	167				201
ENT	8			29		37
Dental				12		12
Total	931	460	67	762	10	2,230

Investigations carried out

X-Rays	13,306
Ultrasounds general	2,381
Ultrasounds gynae	93
Electrocardiograms	8,104
Echocardiograms	158
Holter Monitoring	152
Laboratory Tests	605,137
Lab Samples sent to Malta	51,909
Stress ECG	264
Lung Functions Tests	34

GOZO HEALTH CENTRE

Primary Health Care services in Gozo are administered mainly from Victoria Health Centre. This Health Centre opens daily from 7.00 am to 8.00 pm; after 8.00 pm the service is continued from the Gozo General Hospital. Besides this there are also twelve district clinics scattered around the island.

Attendance at Primary Health Care - Gozo	
General Practitioner	47,270
Treatment	24,755
Home Visits	33
Foreigners	494
Immunisation	5,282
Bereġ (GP)	15,917
Medicine	1,516
Total	95,267

Attendance at Bereġ – Gozo		
	GP	Medicine
Xewkija	1,563	160
Ghasri	638	37
Gharb	1,049	60
San Lawrenz	869	73
Nadur	4,411	247
Qala	1,526	110
Ghajnsielem	1,587	134
Munxar	469	7
Kerċem	605	49
Żebbuġ	481	19
Sannat	691	32
Xaghra	2,028	138
Total	15,917	1,066

Immunisation Service	
Type of Cases	
Di Te Per	153
Di Te (Paed)	1
Di Te (Adult)	314
MMR	212
Yellow Fever	13
Thypoid	39
Meningitis AC	7
Hepatitis A	3
Hepatitis B (Paed)	135
Hepatitis B (Adult)	222
Rabies	-
Flu Inj	3,630
Pentaxim	-
Cholera	4
Tetract Hib	105
Infarix	3
Polio	284
Act Hib	157

HEALTH INSPECTORATE SERVICES

The Gozo Region, comprising all the localities and villages in Gozo including the island of Comino, provides the services that are normally offered by various units in Malta such as the Drug Control Unit, Environmental Health Unit, Food Safety Unit, Burials Administration Unit, and Diving Cards (Licences) Section. In liaison with the Administrative Unit of the Department of Public Health in Malta, this office is also responsible for maintaining strict surveillance on the priority communicable diseases, food safety, non-communicable disease, risk factors and environmental hazards and to take the necessary measures to remove or reduce these threats to the health of the population of Gozo and Comino.

The services provided by this office are: Health Inspectorate Services; Burials Section (St Mary's Cemetery); Pest Control; and Diving Permits Section. The region deploys six Health Inspectors who are assigned to two sections namely: Food Control and Environmental Health Control.

Inspections performed at food premises by category and grading by Risk Assessment Monitoring Programme

Nature of Food Premises	No of Inspections	Grade %					
		A	B	C	D	E	F
Retail Outlets	166	64.5	34.3	1.2	0	0	0
Food Manufacturers	144	71.5	26.4	2.1	0	0	0
Catering outlets & Wedding Halls	249	68.7	29.3	1.6	0.4	0	0
Stalls (Markets, etc.) Kiosk	34	82.4	17.6	0	0	0	0
Warehouses/ Importers	18	94.4	5.6	0	0	0	0
Hotels	23	43.5	52.2	4.3	0	0	0

Inspections and samples taken in connection with investigations/ follow-up cases of Food Poisoning

Inspections	12
Samples Taken	6

Miscellaneous

Inspections of premises icw MEPA applications for development permission	48
Inspections of pharmacies, clinics, private hospitals, old people's homes	53
Fumigation of premises	2

Other inspections of Food Premises

Follow-up inspections re deficiencies/contraventions	43
Product recall	24
Labelling of foodstuffs	7
Inspection re refrigeration of dairy products	100
Other inspections in connection with:	
a) Sampling programme	76
b) Undertakings	13
c) Emergency Control Orders	0
d) Emergency Prohibition Orders	2
e) Miscellaneous Inspections	210
Inspection of premises in connection with licensing	
a) Department of Health	22
b) Department of Trade/MTA	87
Total	584

Samples taken by category

Food	313
Beverages	2
Drinking Water	3
Other Samples	0

Environmental Issues

Service Water – Direct Mains	6
Service Water – Other Sources	0
Infiltration Water	29
Bathing Water	560
Swimming Pools	2
Other Samples	17

Investigation of Complaints

	Complaints	Inspections
<i>In connection with Food:</i>		
Unhygienic premises & unhygienic practices	17	22
Food unfit or past durability date	1	2
Labelling	33	54
Other food complaints	15	24
Total	66	102
<i>In connection with Environment:</i>		
Defective drains	9	19
Blockages in drains	12	29
Premises or sites dirty or containing accumulations	33	71
Infiltrations	28	81
Other complaints (rat sightings)	307	307
Others	81	155
Total	470	662

Nuisance reports issued

Defective drains	16
Blockages in drains	4
Premises or sites dirty or containing accumulations	26
Total	46

Undertakings

Total no. of undertakings	19
Number concluded	14
Still pending	5

Contraventions

Food related	6
Environment related	0
Total	6

Destruction of Food Items

Approximately 27 kgs of food items were destroyed.

Pest Control

The Pest Control Section adopts a programme of preventive baiting and attends to complaints of rat sightings by the general public. Regular routine rat baiting of sewers and open spaces around the island was carried out by section personnel so as to keep at an acceptable level the rats and mice population on the island.

Operatives attended to complaints regarding insect infestations in public areas. Disinfestations by spraying with effective insecticide were carried out during the year.

	No. of Areas	No. of Baits
Localities	564	18,163
Complaints	360	11,801
Sewers	136	2,711
Insect disinfection by spraying	17	-
Cases of Murine Typhus	Nil	-
Packets delivered to the Public	7,040 packets	

Control Cards for Narcotic/Psychotropic Drugs

A total of 1,709 applications for the issuing and renewal of control card for narcotic/psychotropic drugs were processed and issued by this office.

Burials Section

This section is responsible for the administration and management of St Mary's Cemetery, Xewkija and *Tal-Għonq* Cemetery in Victoria, and the application of various laws and regulations related to interments. This involves the administration and management of personnel, the general upkeep of cemeteries, proposed extension of cemetery and construction of new additional graves and research work to establish burial and grave ownership rights.

The number of burials effected at St Mary's Cemetery, Xewkija during 2009 was 61 in private graves and 21 in state-owned (government) graves. Thirteen transfers of remains were effected from one grave to another or from St Mary's Cemetery to other cemeteries in Malta and Gozo while there were also 37 cleaning of graves.

During the year, restoration works were continued in the façade and boundary walls of St Mary's Cemetery. Pruning of trees and other maintenance works were carried out in the cemetery.

Issuing of Diving Permits

No diving permits were issued from this office during this year.

Conclusion

The adoption of the Food Control System and the involvement of the Environment, have contributed in no small way to an improvement in both areas. During this year, a marked improvement was registered in the upgrading of food retail outlets and food service sector. Through the Health Inspector Programme system, a grade was given to each food establishment inspected depending on the risk factor. Subsequently, the operator/responsible person of the food premises in question was served with an improvement notice to rectify the deficiencies noted and given a time limit to remedy the deficiencies.

With regard to complaints concerning environmental issues, complaints were dealt with forthwith and concluded within a stipulated timeframe. Complainant was kept informed of the action taken in the course of the investigation and when complaint was finalised.

SECTION FOR THE CARE OF THE ELDERLY

This section is responsible for a number of support services aimed at enhancing the quality of life of elderly persons and those with special needs. Its aim is to support independent living in the community.

- *Home Help Care Service*: This is the main service offered by this Section, which at the end of the year had 816 beneficiaries in 636 households. The number of staff delivering the service was 78 part-time social assistants. Home Help Care Service (Gozo) is allocated by a Board, which in 2009 held 15 sittings, during which all adjustments in hours were decided, together with the policy governing this service. As stipulated in the Quality Service Charter, the Board is meeting regularly every two weeks. Due to staff shortages, 53 applicants are still waiting to be accommodated with a PTSA while 30 applicants are not benefitting from the full number of hours of home help service allocated to them by the Board.
- *Handyman Service*: This service provides maintenance works and sundry jobs in the homes of the elderly and special needs clients in collaboration with the Construction and Maintenance Unit. During 2009, a total of 39 applications were received while 32 jobs were carried out. Seven applications were cancelled.
- *Telecare Service*: A Care Worker is assigned responsibility for this service. During the year, 51 applications were received and 49 were installed. Regular home visits are carried out on a weekly basis following installation, to ensure the correct use of the service.
- *Incontinence Service*: The incontinence service is also the responsibility of this office. During 2009, five new applications were received under Scheme A while 75 new applications were received under Scheme B. There are 81 clients who benefit regularly from this service under Scheme A while 332 clients benefit under Scheme B.
- *Meals on Wheels*: This service operates as a joint venture between the Ministry for Gozo, the *Moviment Azzjoni Soċjali* and the Society of the Friends of the Sick and the Elderly in Gozo. The service provides a daily mid-day hot meal delivered to the clients' homes. A total number of 4,976 meals were delivered in 2009.
- *Social Activities*: Mother's Day Mass and Christmas Party.
- *U3E Gozo*: This section runs the U3E in Gozo in collaboration with the University Gozo Centre and the Division of Gerontology. Transport is provided and to date 45 persons are attending these courses.
- *Day Centre*: This Centre has been running as a joint venture between the Ministry for Gozo, Caritas and 12 local councils since 1999. The Day Centre is at present operating on a four-day weekly basis. Overall attendance in 2009 was 6,479 elderly persons. Transport is provided by contributions from the local councils. Older persons who attend benefit from the services of a doctor, nurse and hairdresser on request, as well as from social and cultural outings both in Malta and Gozo and recreational activities. The Day Centre organised two other outings in connection with Easter and Christmas. During the year, the Centre on several occasions welcomed other elderly from different Day Centres in Malta.

ADULT TRAINING CENTRE

Official opening of new Centre: May 29, 2009 was the last day that the Adult Training Centre operated from Ghajnsielem. On 2 June, 2009 the Centre started operating from the new premises at Tal Far Street Victoria Gozo, under the name of Santa Marta Day Centre. The Centre was inaugurated by the Prime Minister and the Minister for Gozo, and blessed by HE Mons Mario Grech. This transition from the old premises in Ghajnsielem to the new centre in Victoria brought an overall transformation to the centre in that the centre is now playing a more vital role in the community by upgrading and implementing new programmes.

Structure: The department of elderly and special needs manages the administrative section in close co-ordination with the Santa Marta Day Centre Head. Thirty-five persons with various disabilities attend the centre regularly. Members are organised in six units with the aim of giving more individual attention to those most in need. Lunch is provided by the Gozo General Hospital daily for all members. Through a structured life skills programme, members are trained for better independent living. The centre caters for intellectual, physical and emotional disabilities.

Liaison with other agencies: A healthy co-ordination exists with most agencies for people with special needs in particular some ATCs in Malta, Kummissjoni Nazzjonali Persuni b'Dizabilita` (KNPD), Support Living Division, National Parents Society of Persons with Disability (NPSPD), Eden Foundation Gozo, ESN Sannat, and Association for the Deaf Gozo while first-hand support is being given to GAVI, Enabled Housing Association Derbyshire, UK, Gozo Federation Persons with Disabilities. The Centre also has ongoing contacts with agencies in America, Poland, Check Republic, Denmark and Austria.

Gozo Disability Services: The office, situated in the same premises of the Santa Marta Day Centre, serves to liaise with NGOs and other entities working in the field of disability; it also supports and informs the public in general. Santa Marta Day Centre collaborates with this office in the organisation of educational activities such as the following events: 2 consultations meetings regarding Students with Disability and 16 Plus; a conference on the National Policy of Employment for Persons with Disabilities, which was chaired by Chairman KNPD; and a seminar during the disability week concerning future education and employment, to which persons from the educational and employment sector contributed.

Referrals: Normally referrals are made through the Head; one person was referred from Arka Foundation in 2009.

Services: Services of Personal Aids were given to 20 individuals – these included physiotherapy (32 sessions); communication therapy at the ATC (40 sessions); art and lace at School of Art Ghajnsielem (40 and 32 sessions respectively); lace and weaving at ATC (60 sessions); ophthalmic at GGH (8 sessions) and podology at GGH (10 sessions); a weekly mass service; and dentistry services to all members.

Placements: the following students had placements during the year - 10 from MCAST; three student-facilitators from University (40-hour); 21 students from Holy Cross University in Manchester (15-day); two students from the University of Derbyshire through the Enabled Living Foundation (ELF) (EDGE Programme) (7 weeks). For the latter placement, the ELF in conjunction with the Centre won First Place Accolades Award for Best Provider in Teaching and Providing Training Programmes for Social Work Students out of 400 entities that were nominated throughout England.

Support Group: A support group consisting of parents and volunteers met weekly at the new premises.. Through the group and with the help of JCR Ltd, a Bazaar is run in Victoria. Members from the Centre train, help and participate in the running of the outlet. Social help to people in need is provided from this point. Dancing, horse riding therapy, weaving, lace and craft sessions were organised.

Outwork: Work was done for Ta' Ċenċ Hotel, San Lawrenz Resort, NGO, Enable Living Foundation flat in Gozo, ETC, Eden Foundation in Gozo. Support in the transportation of rehabilitation equipment and maintenance on accessories was provided at primary schools, members' residences and other entities. The courier service was continued in liaison with Commercial Couriers Company Ltd. Work was done for Magro Brothers. Five persons did some work at MAS apartments.

Cultural Activities: Members took part in cultural activities in Malta and Gozo such as Fun Games, organised by Method Company at Ta'Qali, Crafts Exhibition and Crib Exhibition. Members went on day outings to various places of interest in Malta. Two morning outings are organised on a weekly basis in Gozo.

In Serving Training Course: A one-week course about self-esteem was held at the Centre, as well as a Health and Safety Course and Management Course. Through Enable, two staff members attended a 4-day course in Derbyshire. All expenses were paid by the Enabled Living Foundation. The staff members participated in the Annual General Conference for Enable.

Activities: The pool therapy programme at Arka Foundation was continued. Numerous social events were organised during summer, Christmas and Easter time such as parents outing, day camp in Comino, swimming at various bays, etc.

.FAMILY WELFARE (GOZO SOCIAL WORK UNIT)

The Gozo Social Work Unit offers social work intervention with a generalist approach. Social work is being delivered on a decentralised basis, with some members of staff being assigned at the Psychiatric Hospital, Ta' l-Ibraġġ GGH. Otherwise, social work is delivered from the main Social Work Unit.

Generic Social Work Unit

- *New Cases:* There were 95 new cases dealt with by the Generic Social Work Unit while 38 new cases were dealt with by the social workers at the Psychiatric Gozo Hospital, bringing the total of new cases followed by the SW Unit to 133.
- *Follow-up cases:* By the end of 2009, the Generic SW Unit had dealt with 327 cases that required follow-up interventions. These follow-up cases were classified as follows: 109 cases that required weekly intervention and 121 cases that required intervention on a fortnight basis, whilst 42 cases were terminated. 55 cases required other periodical intervention.
- *One-time intervention:* 70 cases which required one-time intervention were dealt with by the Intake section. Such cases are not considered as part of the Unit's caseload and therefore are closed/referred immediately.
- *Telephone interventions:* Such service which the Social Work Unit deems very important is delivered daily, and thus it is difficult to record and quantify such interventions.
- *On-call Service:* This service entails the service of a social worker after office hours. 75 calls needed outside intervention. There were also a considerable number of telephone interventions that is difficult to quantify.
- *Case conferences:* 39 case conferences were attended by staff members.
- *Supervision:* Supervision was carried out on a monthly basis with all staff members at the Unit.
- *University placements:* Four students had their social work practical placements with the Unit during spring/autumn and summer respectively.
- *Gozo General Hospital:* SW service was delivered at the GGH and Detox.
- *Juvenile Court:* 8 sessions were held.
- *Court appearances:* 63 court appearances by the social work staff were carried out. These included giving evidence, writing up social reports and seeking legal advice.
- *Supervised access visits:* 84 supervised access visits ordered by Court were carried out. Such cases involve weekly visits at the Ċentru Hidma Soċjali/community.
- *Carer's pension:* 9 applications were processed by the Unit. These applications require home and personal assessment followed by written reports.
- *Social administrators:* 5 persons benefited from this service every month.
- *Social reports:* 57 written social reports were done by the Unit to various departments, agencies, courts and places of work.

- *In-service training*: during 2009, the staff of the Unit attended several training sessions to enhance their performance as social workers:
 - Final Dissemination Conference – Leonardo Mobility Project
 - 2 Disability Conferences at St Martha
 - Conference regarding Childrens’ needs in Gozo
 - One day orientation visit at Villa Chelsea
- *Psychiatric/Gozo General Hospital*: Social work was delivered to the psychiatric wards at Ta’ I-İbraġġ Hospital by the two social workers who are assigned on a full-time basis there. (vide separate annual report hereunder described)
- *Community Chest Fund*: 23 applications were submitted to the CCF by the Unit,
- *National Commission of Disabled Persons*: 18 persons benefited from services given by the Commission after the Unit’s intervention.
- *Elderly*: Social work interventions were carried out with the elderly and upon request from the 'agencies' concerned or by relatives in the community.
- *Talks*: 46 talks related to social work were delivered by SW staff in various localities and on various community radio stations and schools.
- *Sub-committee domestic violence*: A social worker sits on the national sub-committee on domestic violence. Six meetings were held on a bi-monthly basis.

Hospital Social Work Services

38 new cases were referred to our section as follows:

Psychiatric	20
Addiction	4
Child Guidance Clinic	5
Re-activated CGC	2
Social Support	9
Follow-ups	42
Re-activated	7
Put away cases	15
Deceased	1

The following activities were also carried out:

- 2 case conferences and 2 case reviews at Villa Chelsea, 3 Arka, and Tal-İbraġġ Hospital.
- Liaised with the Department for Social Security, the ETC, the Department for Social Housing, the Public Registry, the ID (Electoral) Office, various embassies, the Police, the CDAU, Mount Carmel Hospital, YPU, Caritas, and Oasis Foundation amongst others.
- The Hospital Social Work Section provided the service of a casual welfare officer at the Male geriatrics, St Anna residence and Long Stay Ward. 48 Interventions were made by our CWO.
- The Unit liaises with the Occupation Therapy Dept re therapeutic sessions for the benefit of patients who either are currently at the Psychiatric wards or living in the community.
- Accompanied six clients to court and attended two court sittings.
- Participated in three local community radio programmes to promote the services provided.
- This Unit also liaised with S/Ws at Mount Carmel Hospital and YPU.
- Contact was kept with several Embassies; in Malta so as to assist our foreign clients who were admitted at SSW.
- 4 ADHD support group meetings were also attended.
- Liaison was also kept with the Malta Community Chest Fund regarding eight applications in connection with patients who travel abroad form medical treatment and six applications for social needs.
- Easter eggs were given to children at the Pediatrics Ward (GGH), psychiatric patients and also clients who attend the Child Guidance Clinic.

- Caritas - 14 Clients were referred for social support.
- Friends of the Sick and the Elderly support the Section's social activities at GGH and Tal-Ibragġ hospitals, besides the social workers are in constant contact in obtaining the necessary equipment for clients living in the community.
- SMOM was involved in taking a group of residents from St Anne Residence (GGH) to Lourdes in France in May 2009, which would not have been possible without the intervention of the social workers. Also SMOM donated six Christmas hampers to our clients in need.
- Twelve supervision sessions were carried out in connection with Social Work delivery. Such supervision has been effective and provided the possibility of exploring different ways; to be applied in practice.

SOCIAL SECURITY OFFICE

Victoria District Office

This Office deals directly with the general public in connection with National Insurance Pensions, other Contributory Pensions including Foreign Pensions and Non-contributory Social Security Benefits and Assistance. Work carried out at this office mainly comprises financial investigations; the raising of applications for contributory and non-contributory pensions, benefits and assistance; dealing with customers' queries, and registration under Social Security Act of newly-employed workers.

- *Non-contributory Pensions/Assistance/Benefits* - This section deals with applications for, and monitoring of non-contributory assistance, review of current benefits and carries out financial investigations for free medical aid (Pink Form).
- *Contributory/Foreign Pensions* - This section deals with applications in connection with Pensions for which National Insurance Contributions have been paid or credited. It is also responsible for the raising of Foreign Pension applications: Australia, UK, Canada and all EU countries.
- *Children's & Supplementary Allowance/Marriage Grant/Maternity Benefit* - This section deals with Children's Allowance and Supplementary Allowance new applications, declarations and queries. It is also responsible for the raising of Marriage Grant and Maternity Benefit Applications.
- *New Registrants/Medical Certificates* - This section is responsible for the registration under the Social Security Act of newly employed workers (NI 3). Medical Certificates (SB) referred to this section are daily entered on computer system (SABS).
- *Medical Boards* - Medical Boards in connection with Medical Assistance, Social Assistance, Disability Pension, Sickness Benefit, Injury Benefit and Australian Pension were held approximately on alternate Thursdays at the Gozo General Hospital.
- *Statistics* - During 2009, the number of claimants who made use of the above services at Victoria District Office was 23,154. The number of persons who called personally or contacted us by telephone; the number of queries lodged and applications raised, according to the type of benefit are shown below:

	Total	Query	Application	In Person	By Telephone
Non-Contributory Pension					
Age Pension (AP)	1,034	929	105	908	126
Blind Pension (BLD)	4	4	0	4	0
Carer's Pension (CP)	31	27	4	25	6
Disability Pension (HP)	68	65	3	62	6
Contributory & Foreign Pension					
Retirement Pension (RP)	2,818	2,582	236	2,358	460
Widows' Pension (WP)	420	374	46	342	78
Invalidity Pension (IP)	1,504	1,449	55	1,258	246
Foreign Pensions (FP)	867	794	73	771	96
Social Assistance					
Social Assistance (SA)	998	925	73	748	250
Social Assistance Carers (SAC)	97	94	3	85	12
Drug Addicts (DAD)	99	78	21	53	46

Single Unmarried Parent (SUP)	193	179	14	142	51
Unemployment Assistance (UA)	2,675	2,505	170	2,326	349
Social Assistance Board (SAB)	2	1	1	1	1
Short-term Benefits					
Marriage Grant (MRG)	99	28	71	92	7
Injury Benefit (IB)	51	48	3	44	7
Special/Unemployment Benefit (SUB/UB)	796	790	6	706	90
Milk Grant (MG)	9	3	6	8	1
Sickness Benefit (SB)	1,092	1,092	0	913	179
Child Benefits					
Disabled Child Allowance (DCA)	20	17	3	15	5
Children's Allowance (CA)	2,288	1,970	318	2,083	205
Maternity Benefit (MB)	136	48	88	123	13
Foster Care (FC)	0	0	0	0	0
Medical Assistance/Aid					
Tuberculosis Assistance (TA)	0	0	0	0	0
Leprosy Assistance (LA)	3	3	0	3	0
Sickness Allowance (SKA)	527	460	67	419	108
Pink Form/Card (PF)	1,727	894	833	1,678	49
Supplementary Allowance (SPA)	3,058	2,751	307	2,871	187
Admission to Elderly Homes	0	0	0	0	0
Insurability (NI3)	795	527	268	695	100
Energy Benefit (ENRG)	736	618	118	619	117
SVB	4	0	4	4	0
NI Contributions	664	664	0	530	134
Foreign Bonus	309	45	264	304	5
Exemptions	2	0	2	2	0
Waiving of Examination Fees	26	1	25	25	1
Orphans' Allowance	2	1	1	2	0
Total	23,154	19,996	3,188	20,219	2,935
Total SB Certificates					20,450

- *Training* - During the year, training was organised for all personnel at Victoria District Office, in Pensions and other benefits and IT. In addition, personnel attended other training courses on various topics as Developing Assertiveness and Self-confidence, Anger Management, Communication and Conflict Management Skills and Data Protection Awareness, organised by the Staff Development Organisation.

Nadur District Office

This District Office is responsible for dealing directly with the public either in person or through the telephone, helps people to complete forms and deals with their queries in connection with the benefits offered by the Office. Work carried out at our District Office mainly comprises:

- Applications for all types of Contributory and non-Contributory Benefits and Assurances, non-Contributory Benefits including Unemployment Assistance, Social Assistance, Medical Assistance, Social Assistance for Females, Carer's Pension, Energy Benefit, Handicapped Pension, etc.
- Contributory Benefits include Retirement Pensions, Invalidity Pension, Widows Pension, Injury Benefits, Sickness Benefits and Unemployment Benefits
- Completes New Applications for Children's Allowance and Supplementary Allowances
- Financial investigations to determine whether a person is entitled to free medical aid
- Assisting and guiding clients in filling out Applications as regards Foreign Pensions and Benefits such as those falling under Reciprocal Agreements and EU countries

The following statistical data show the number of applications, reviews and queries handled, related to the SS benefits during 2009.

	Questions/Reviews	New Applications
Non-contributory Benefits		
Unemployment Assistance	200	48
Social Assistance	131	5
Single Unemployed Parents (SUP)	15	5
SAF (Social Assistance Females)	14	6
Handicapped Pension	11	1
Age Pension	259	32
Carer's Pension	2	1
Sickness Assistance	84	37
Energy Benefit	130	74
Supplementary Allowance	568	101
Contributory Benefits		
Invalidity Pensions	53	16
Retirement Pensions	177	61
Widows Pensions	14	21
Marriage Bonus	0	14
Maternity Bonus	2	30
Over 75 Bonus (XM3A/82)	50	129
Children's Allowance	500	96
Foreign Pensions (Canada, Australia, UK & EU countries)	18	37
Injury Benefit	5	6
Sickness/Special/Unemployment Benefit (UB & SUB & SB)	59	0
Direct Credit Applications	35	12
Power of Attorney (Prokura)	9	4
Stop Payments		19
NI 64	0	10
Issue of new NI Numbers		18

This section is also responsible for financial investigations for free medicines. The total new applications for Free Medical Aid consisted of 207, of which 134 were issued as Free, 70 were issued against GGH 421/SLH145 DH 360 (Diabetic), and three did not qualify. The Pink Cards (DH 128) which were issued for Free Medicines, amounted to 116.

As in previous years, refunds being repaid by individuals that were overpaid to claimants were also collected at this Area Office. The amount of refunds for this period amounted to €14,892.50.

Medical Certificates submitted and registered at the Area Office for this period were 1,203.

INDUSTRIAL AND EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS

During the year, this section carried out 85 routine inspections, during which employees were interviewed and 24 irregularities were detected. Action from this end was taken to rectify these irregularities. Sixty follow ups/special visits were undertaken.

80 claims amounting to €84,196 were issued in respect of arrears in wages, wages below the WRO/NSO, vacation leave, bonuses, overtime remuneration, and weekly allowance not granted. Two officers from this section attended 27 court sittings/perizias.

CENTRE FOR NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS

During the year, the number of non-government organisations and voluntary groups making use of the service offered once again increased. The number of registered members with the NGO Association surpassed 162 and these organisations collectively held a total of 475 meetings. All registered organisations benefited from almost 15,652 photocopies at a heavily subsidised rate. The tribunals for Wardens and for underage children's rights as well as the ADT (for the driving test) made use of the NGO

Centre. Apart from this, the Centre - in collaboration with the Ministry for Gozo - was responsible for the co-ordination of the Annual Subsidy Scheme for all Gozitan NGOs. Another service offered by the Centre to several departments was the use of a overhead digital projector.

UNIVERSITY OF MALTA GOZO CENTRE

During 2009, the following courses were organised:

- *Completed:*
 - Course leading to the Diploma in Facilitating Inclusive Education (ended Feb 2009) - 68 students successfully completed the course and were conferred with the diploma in November/December at the University of Malta;
 - Diploma in Commerce course (ended June 2009) - 14 students successfully completed the course and were conferred with the diploma in November/December at the University of Malta;
 - MA in Islands and Small States Studies – 6 students successfully completed the course and were conferred with a degree in November/December at the University of Malta.
- *New Degree/Diploma/Certificate Courses:* In October, the University of Malta opened a record number of courses at its campus in Gozo. The courses are: Diploma in Commerce; Bachelor of Arts; Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Criminology; Bachelor of Commerce; Master of Arts in Islands and Small States Studies; Master of Arts in Hospitaller Studies; Master in Translation; Master in Business Administration (Executive). The course leading to the Master of Arts in Hospitaller Studies, being held for the first time in Gozo, is being offered entirely through the video conference system, where the lectures are being held at the main campus in Msida and Gozitan students attend the lecture at the Gozo Campus. The Master in Translation and the Master in Business Administration (Executive) are also being run for the first time in Gozo.
- *Short courses:* the following short courses were offered at the University Gozo Centre during 2009 – Geographic Information Studies; Train the Trainer; Systems of Knowledge.
- *Courses part-financed by the European Union:* One of the courses leading to the Diploma in Commerce is being part-financed by the EU European Social Fund under the Operational Programme II-Cohesion Policy 2007–2013. Thirty three students are attending this course.

Extra Curricular Activities

- The Hon Giovanna Debono distributed certificates to 64 candidates who successfully completed short courses at the University of Malta - Gozo Campus. The courses held were: *Introduction to Criminology*, *Inclusive Education: Transforming Schools into Communities*, and *Transforming Schools into Communities*. Minister Debono, commenting on the activities of the Gozo Campus, said that the partnership between the Ministry for Gozo and the University of Malta - Gozo Campus is resulting in fostering education at all levels in Gozo and therefore making an important contribution to Gozitan society. Referring to the short courses offered at the Campus, Minister Debono said that she was very pleased that these courses were attracting participants from all walks of life and different age groups.
- The annual *Gozo Lace Day* event was organised for the 13th consecutive year on 19 April 2009 at the University of Malta - Gozo Campus premises. The event consisted of a number of exhibitions and demonstrations of Gozo lace and talks on matters related to lace-making. Present for the event were the Minister for Gozo; Mr Anton Tabone, former Speaker of the House of Representatives and Ms Consiglia Azzopardi, coordinator of the Lace Making Programme. Several persons, many of them lace makers, attended the event. The event included exhibitions of old lace pieces and textile crafts. Other exhibits were mounted by the International Organisation of Needle and Bobbin Lace (OIDFA) and by the Malta Lace Guild. There were also demonstrations of sprang, embroidery, card weaving, tapestry weaving, cord lacing and information about courses in different aspects of Maltese Lace. Koperattiva Ghawdxija tal-Bizzilla u Artigjanat were also present with lace-making materials.
- On 2 May the University of Malta (Gozo Campus) launched its new webpage. It includes information about the Campus and about the services offered. It can be accessed at www.um.edu.mt/ugc.

- On 21 May, the Prime Minister Lawrence Gonzi paid a short visit to the University Gozo Campus where he met with a number of participants who had followed courses co-financed by the European Social Fund held at the University Gozo Campus. Some of the participants explained how these courses had resulted in their decision to further their studies at tertiary level. The Prime Minister was accompanied by Minister for Gozo and the Parliamentary Secretary for Public Dialogue.
- On 29 May, a professor from the Physics Department of the University delivered a public lecture at the Ministry for Gozo entitled *A 12 Year Study of Atmospheric Pollution in the Central Mediterranean, A Maltese - German Project, 1993 – 2009*.
- On 28 August, the Campus organised its annual summer activity entitled *Tribute to Charles Camilleri – An Evening of Music and Song*. The event was attended by an audience of about 200 persons.
- *Publications* - The 20th and 21st edition of the *Gozo Observer* were published in June and December 2009 respectively.

OTHER DEPARTMENTS

INLAND REVENUE DEPARTMENT (GOZO)

The Inland Revenue Department is responsible to the Government for the administration of the Income Tax and Capital Transfer Duty Acts and the enforcement of Social Security Contributions under the direction of the Ministry of Finance. The Gozo Branch deals specifically with Gozitan individual taxpayers as well as bodies of persons and it offers assistance and information to the general public in complying with their fiscal obligations. Moreover, the Call Centre processes all telephone calls, e-mails and other correspondence received by the whole Department.

FSS and Provisional Tax

FSS deductions, as well as Provisional Tax paid during 2009, are as a rule first set off against tax assessed for the year of assessment 2010, any balance remaining is then credited against outstanding tax for earlier years, if any, or else refunded. During 2009, the number of employers who submitted the FSS annual reconciliation documents for 2008 amounted to 816. The FSS division captured and reconciled data covering 3,601 employees for 2008. FSS collected by the Gozo Cash Office amounted to €1,411,755 as against the €1,430,592 collected in 2008. Provisional Tax collected during 2009 amounted to €2,901,666 as against the €2,966,823 in 2008. Provisional Capital Gains Tax withheld on deeds of sales decreased from €5,158,114 (2008) to €4,784,612.

Revenue

The Revenue from Income Tax collected during 2009 amounted to €11,508,980. The following schedule is a breakdown of revenue by system of collection as received through the Gozo Office.

	2009	2008
	€	€
PAYE/ FSS (Private Employees only)	1,411,755	1,430,592
Provisional Tax	2,901,666	2,966,823
Provisional Tax (Capital Gains Tax)	4,784,612	5,158,114
Provisional Tax (Self-Assessment)	1,653,564	1,496,801
Part-Time Self-Employed	148,266	137,453
Penalties	104,812	70,239
Agricultural Scheme	31,567	39,524
Miscellaneous	378	343
Settlement Tax	472,360	534,048
Total Income Tax Receipts	11,508,980	11,833,937
Social Security Contributions	7,258,354	7,113,790
Total I.T & S.S.C.	18,767,334	18,947,727

Duty on Documents Act	4,759,758	5,277,975
Death & Donation Duty	4,876	8,956
Miscellaneous	527	541
Total Capital Transfer Duty	4,765,161	5,287,472
Grand Total	23,532,495	24,235,199

Social Security Contributions are received at the Gozo Cash Office on behalf of the Social Security Department in respect of Gozitan self-employed persons and Gozitan private employees. The number of receipts performed by the Cash Office in respect of Income Tax and Social Security Contributions was as follows:

	2009	2008
Income Tax	8,569	9,486
Social Security`	12,639	13,083
Total Receipts	21,208	22,569

Collection of Tax

As part of the Department's drive to collect outstanding tax balances, a 0.75 % per month additional tax is being imposed on any outstanding balances. Settlement tax receipts amounted to €472,360, however tax withheld by means of the FSS system vis-à-vis Gozitan government and parastatal employees is paid in Malta and is not included with receipts recorded by the Gozo Branch.

Tax and Other Clearances

During 2009 the Branch processed 171 authorisations for tax clearances in connection with the repatriation of funds from Malta. It also issued 18 approvals for the exemption or reduction of the 7% Capital Gains Tax rate on deeds of sale. These approvals are requested prior to deeds of sale in those cases where a rate lesser than the statutory 7% tax will be enough to cover any ensuing capital gains tax. 114 pension scheme applications were issued to the Department of Social Security.

Self-Assessments & Declarations

The Branch acknowledged electronically 5,245 Self-Assessment returns during 2009 (564 of which were for previous years) whereas 12,517 automatic assessments were raised vis-à-vis Gozitan taxpayers under the Free-Filers System. 362 Correction Forms were raised against Self-Assessments.

Agricultural Scheme

This scheme which was introduced during 2005 enabled farmers to opt to be charged at source a Final Withholding Tax of 3% when selling their products to registered payers. During 2009, the Branch acknowledged electronically 396 Part-timer and 190 Full-timer Agricultural Scheme returns.

IRD Call Centre

The Call Centre's main objective is to answer all incoming telephone and e-mail queries relating to Income Tax and Social Security Contributions. Queries are made by all categories of taxpayers ie. individuals, companies, employers and expatriates. The IRD Call Centre also receives general correspondence regarding changes to be made to Taxpayers Personal Index. During 2009 the IRD Call Centre replied to 114,863 telephone calls as against 90,561 in 2008, 9,779 e-mails (6,744 in 2008) and processed 3,208 letters of correspondence (3,168 in 2008).

Duty on Documents – Transfers *Inter - Vivos*

During 2009, this Branch examined 1,150 deeds of sales and other transfers of immovable property, out of which 743 cases were inspected by the Department's Engineers. As a result, 422 original claims were raised. Stamp duty on such transfers amounted to €2,942,119. During the year, 44 new objections were registered and 27 cases were concluded. Besides duty on transfer of immovable property, €1,500 was collected in respect of share transfers. Duty collected from additional claims issued amounted to €127,539. Additional duty on such claims amounted to €31,007. Outstanding balance of assessed duty, including disputed duty, amounted to €1,627,049. During the period under review, 584 Promises of Sales were registered with the Department. Provisional stamp duty paid on these promises of sales amounted to €525,219 (€667,742 during 2008).

Duty on documents – Transfers *Causa Mortis*

393 returns *causa mortis* were filed during 2009, out of which 122 cases were inspected by the Department's engineers. 266 original claims were raised during the year. Stamp duty on such declarations amounted to €1,102,550; 3 new objections were registered; and 10 cases were concluded during 2009. Revenue collected from additional claims issued amounted to €25,655. Additional duty on such claims amounted to €2,670. Outstanding balance of assessed duty, including disputed duty, amounted to €232,880.

Death and Donation Duty

28 additional returns were filed during 2009. 14 assessments were raised, whilst 14 transmissions were found to be exempt from tax. Duty claimed during the period was €5,529, and revenue collected totalled €5,875 (including €2,937 interest). Outstanding balance of assessed duty, including disputed duty up to end 2009, amounted to €199,443.

VAT OFFICE

- *New Applications:* This Office received and processed 395 applications for a New VAT registration number.
- *Returns:* VAT returns from Gozo taxpayers were received regularly throughout the year. These returns amounted to 10,115.
- *Fiscal Receipt Books:* 7,251 personalised fiscal receipt books were distributed to VAT registration holders. 6,210 personalised and 321 non-personalised were collected from Tax payers.
- *Cancellations:* 193 taxpayers applied for de-registration of their VAT number.
- *Appeals:* 4 appeals were received at this office from Gozitan taxpayers. These appeals were acknowledged and relative papers were forwarded to Secretary Appeals Board.
- *Courts:* During this year several court sittings in connection with VAT returns were attended.
- The officers of this section helped taxpayers in filling the returns; authorised 52 fiscal cash register transfers; received 225 applications for grants on funerals, 70 on weddings, 15 on musical instruments and 60 on bicycles; and dealt with numerous queries from the general public.

ELECTORAL OFFICE (GOZO)

The Electoral Office (Gozo Section) receives applications for the registration of voters, transfer of residence, change of status, or other required corrections to be included in the revised electoral register.

In conjunction with the Commissioner of Police, the office deals also with the issue, renewal and distribution of identity cards.

The Electoral Office in Gozo regularly carries out street inspections in connection with naming/renaming of streets. This is done to ensure that the names of voters listed under old street names are correctly registered under the new street names in the Electoral Register. Their respective ID cards are also changed. The Office also provides a service to housebound and bed-ridden patients in hospitals and institutions for the aged and in many private residences where the sick and aged persons residing there request new identity cards and voting registrations.

Local Councils' Elections in Gozo were held at Rabat (Gozo), Sannat and Gharb on 6 June 2009 together with the European Parliament Elections. Preparations for such elections included the setting up of polling places. During the elections, staff from the Gozo Electoral Office, together with Commissioners, inspected such places on a regular basis. Other work involved distribution of undelivered voting documents, issuing of special voting documents, receiving applications for AEC's, counting staff and other related matters.

Before the elections, the Electoral Commission assigned one of its members at the Gozo Electoral Office to receive nominations from interested candidates for the said elections. During polling day the Commission sent its representatives in Gozo to supervise and to settle matters that arose and to ensure, by its presence, the smooth running of the elections.

The number of transactions carried out in connection with the Electoral Register and ID cards were as:

New Registrations (Electoral Register April 2009)	219
(Electoral Register Oct. 2009)	245
Change of address	732
Change of status (due to marriage)	170
Corrections	155
Replacement of lost and damaged ID cards	570
Issuing of ID cards for foreigners (Aliens)	263

ITS

- *Courses held at ITS during academic year 2008/9:* Full-time course Hospitality (Extended Skills Training Scheme). In October 2008, 16 students entered in the first year of the course and 14 students continued in the second and final year. This is a two-year full-time course. In October 2009, 16 students started their first year and 14 continued their second year.
- *Short courses in Food Hygiene:* During 2009, 72 students attended a short course in Food Hygiene.
- *Part-time Courses:*
 - Food Preparation & Culinary Arts – 3 students
 - Pastry & Baking Course – Level 1 – 15 students
 - Pastry & Baking Course – Level 1 – 9 students
 - WSET – 13 students
- *ITS Restaurant:* The ITS restaurant was open to the public for lunch, four times weekly during the Academic year 2008/9.
- *Hostel Accommodation:* 35 guests availed themselves of the hostel accommodation.
- *Other Activities:* Opening of Hotel School in Qala.
- Seven hundred mince pies were prepared by our students for the Arka Foundation
- A decorated cake was presented to the President of Malta during *l-Istrina* campaign and the funds collected from it were donated to charity.

JOYCE DIMECH
Director (Customer Services)

Department for Projects and Development

The Department for Projects and Development incorporates the Works Branch, the Construction and Maintenance Unit, Public Cleansing Branch and the Agriculture and Fisheries Branch.

The main objectives of the Department for Projects and Development are:

- to ensure that Gozo has the proper infrastructure required for the island’s development;
- to protect, manage and enhance the natural heritage of Gozo;
- to provide the proper environment and extend the necessary services in the agricultural and fisheries sectors so that progress and growth can be achieved in these industries;
- to support investment; and
- to ensure that progress in Gozo follows the principles of sustainable development and effectively promote Gozo as an eco-island.

WORKS BRANCH

Finance and Administration

The main functions of the Finance and Administration Section is the management of human resources, contracts, stores and registry and provides the administrative support to all the other sections within the branch.

Districts Section

The Districts’ Section main function is the provision of services to the local councils on a contractual basis. However, the section is also involved in carrying out works which fall within the responsibility of the central government.

Throughout 2009, works carried out consisted in the maintenance and embellishment of playing fields, construction and maintenance of pavements, patching of streets in different localities, building and maintenance of retaining rubble and *franka* stone walls and the building and cleaning of water culverts.

Roads Section

The Roads Section is responsible for the general up-keep and maintenance of roads on the island. The section was engaged in the construction of retaining walls and pavements, construction of water culverts, repair of rubble walls, maintenance on roundabouts and central strips, patching with hot and cold asphalt in all arterial and distributary roads, the fixing and maintenance of traffic signs and the applying of road marking paint.

This section was responsible for the issuing of tenders for new roads and for the supervision of the works carried out by the various contractors. During the year resurfacing works were carried out on a section of Borg Gharib Street, l/o Ghajnsielem, part of St Leonard Street, Capuchins’ Street, Taflija Road, Republic Street, Wied il-Lunzjata Street and Enrico Mizzi Street in Victoria; and St John Street in Nadur. This Section was also involved on the reconstruction works in parts of Foreman Street, Victoria, as well as constructing a new water culvert in St Anthony Street, Xaghra.

During 2009 new works were started on the following roads; Church Street, Nadur and part of Ketelby Street, Għarb.

Manufacturing and Services Section

The Manufacturing and Services Section comprises carpentry, electrical and metal work units. The section also carries out repair and maintenance work on government-owned vehicles and machinery.

During the year, new furniture and apertures were manufactured for various government departments and other entities. Apertures were fitted at Mġarr ix-Xini Tower, Gozo Law Courts and Dawwara Nursery. Furniture was manufactured, amongst others, for the Victoria Police Station, Adult Training Centre and the Ministry for Gozo Administrative Centre. This Section was also responsible for carrying out of other minor and sundry repair works at various government departments.

During 2009 a number of platforms were constructed for use in cultural activities, like *Notte Gozitana* and the holding of operas at the Aurora and Astra theatres. The unit was also responsible for the erection of the carnival stands, the setup of cubicles for the local council and EU elections.

The electrical unit is mainly concerned with the maintenance of decorative lights at various sites. Localities under its responsibility include: Fontana, Kerċem, Marsalforn, Mġarr, Munxar, Nadur, Rabat, Sannat, Santa Luċija, Xagħra, Xewkija, Xlendi and Żebbuġ. The unit also carried out installation of flood lights in connection with various cultural activities such as Carnival, the Gozo Agricultural show at Villa Rundle in Victoria and Christmas activities.

This Unit was responsible for new electrical installation at the Government Experimental Farm in Xewkija and the Government Cold Stores. Other regular maintenance works on electrical units was carried out at tac-Cawla H.O.S., St Mary's Cemetery, public conveniences, offices at the Works Branch, Cold Stores, Experimental Farm and at the Gozo Law Courts.

The metal unit of this Section manufactured benches, railings and beach ladders which were installed in various beaches and tourist resorts. The unit also carried out maintenance on metal works at the Administrative Centre. A team from this unit was responsible for the laying and maintenance of water proofing membrane at various departments and offices.

Building and Engineering Section

The Building and Engineering Section is responsible for the provision of services which include the preparation of specifications for tenders, expropriations, draughtsmanship, quantity surveying and for the issuing of trenching permits.

During 2009, this unit continued with its programme of carrying out alterations, maintenance and improvement works at the Administrative Centre in Victoria. Refurbishment works were carried out at the Coronary Care Unit, the Helipad area in Xewkija and at the Gozo General Hospital. This Unit continued with the construction works at the Civil Abattoir, embellishment works at the Dawwara Nursery and ongoing maintenance and embellishment in Xlendi and Marsalforn. Other embellishment works were carried out at the Boat Yard and Fishermen Stores in Mġarr Harbour.

This section also carried drainage works for the Red Cross Section at their new offices at the Government Farm. During the year work was commenced on a new shade house at the Government Farm, fencing works at various sites, cleaning of various water culverts and general maintenance on other government-owned property.

This section was responsible for the issuing of tenders and the supervision of works carried out in connection with the reconstruction of part of the quay retaining wall and for the removal of boulders from

seabed at Hondoq Bay. This section also issued tenders for and supervised works for clearing and carting away of loose material at Xwejni road l/o Żebbuġ and for the demolishing of part of the cliff-face at Lighthouse Street, Ghasri which was in danger of collapsing.

Building Maintenance and Restoration Section

The Building Maintenance and Restoration Section is stationed at the Ċittadella and is mainly responsible for the carrying out of restoration, maintenance and construction works.

During 2009 this section carried out the following works:

- laying of flagstones (*ċangatura*) along a number of pathways located within the Ċittadella precincts;
- repair works on various stretches of rubble walls within the Ċittadella precincts;
- structural consolidation works, including the rebuilding of collapsed sections, pointing and grouting, of a stretch of curtain wall at the Ċittadella;
- continuation and finalisation of restoration works on a stone statue of Our Lady of Graces located in the forecourt of the Bishop's Conservatory School, Victoria;
- erection of scaffolding and/or shoring structures at various sites;
- various works carried out by the marbler, relating to the manufacture and/or restoration of marble inscriptions at various sites.

CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE UNIT

The main objectives of the Construction and Maintenance Unit renders services principally in the construction and maintenance areas to the general public, NGOs and to other government entities.

During 2009, CMU employees were deployed on the reconstruction of retaining and boundary walls which have either collapsed or else were hindering access to passage ways. Some 560m x 6 courses retaining walls and 81m x 5 courses boundary walls were reconstructed with *franka* stone. On some sites, excavation works and works on new foundations had to be undertaken in order to ensure safety. CMU rubble wall builders constructed an average of 783m x 2m of rubble walls which had deteriorated due to heavy rainfall. Our Unit was also responsible for carrying out works on new pavements and ramps; an average length of 774.80m x 1m of pavements and ramps were constructed in various localities in Gozo. The Unit also takes special care to ensure, that as far as possible, pavements and ramps are built to facilitate access to persons with special needs. The CMU is also responsible for the improvement and maintenance of farm access roads passages and ramps in fields and surrounding areas. Repair works, levelling and surfacing of passages leading to fields were given priority in order to provide proper access to farmers. An average length of 870m x 3.50m of farm roads, 96m x 3.30m of ramps and 86m x 1m of passages were levelled and surfaced with concrete.

Other construction work was carried out at NGOs' premises namely at the Horse Racing Track and Xagħra Playing Field. Repair works on chain link fencing was carried out in various football grounds. Other maintenance work was done in various public places such as playing fields.

The CMU carried out plastering and painting and other repair works on government tenements, schools and other government offices. Water culverts, roads, central strips and fountains had to be maintained during the year. Works on iron railings, iron grades and repair of tools were carried out by our blacksmith at the premises' workshop. Iron railings and grades were afterwards installed at playing fields and public sites.

Other general maintenance was carried out by CMU employees who are currently on loan with Qala and Xewkija Local Councils and other government offices, namely the Adult Training Centre and Gozo Heliport. Other sundry works such as weed cutting and road cleaning in various localities was also undertaken by this Unit.

CLEANSING SERVICES BRANCH

Public Cleansing

The main responsibility of this section is the overall management of domestic and rural waste and the upkeep of the environment through the services it offers.

The services that this section offers include daily scavenging and weed-cutting, collection of bulky refuse, attending to public conveniences and their proper maintenance and attending to local councils' day-to-day activities. This Section was very actively involved in the cleaning and upkeep of public areas during the *Notte Gozitana* event held last year.

Scavenging is provided on a six day weekly basis in all urban localities in Gozo with the exception of Victoria, Nadur, Xewkija, Ghasri, San Lawrenz, Sannat, Ghajnsielem, Xaghra, Qala and Fontana which are serviced by private contractors. However, main roads in these localities which fall under the responsibility of Central Government are still serviced by this Section. Additionally, scavenging is even provided on Sundays in Victoria centre, Mgarr, Marsalforn and Xlendi and in localities during the celebration of parish feasts.

The Public Cleansing Section is responsible for the removal and disposal of cumbersome refuse. During the past year, the Section attended to 583 requests to remove and dispose of bulky material.

Furthermore, it was responsible for the running of 13 public conveniences in Gozo and one in Comino. Maintenance and repair works were carried out regularly by the section's maintenance team. As a measure to improve customer needs, public conveniences were kept open for longer periods of time during the summer months in beaches and resorts. This measure was effective in Marsalforn, Xlendi, Dwejra, Ramla and Hondoq ir-Rummien.

As in the previous year, this Section was involved in the cleaning of country lanes and footpaths in liaison with the Ministry for Gozo and the MTA representatives.

Beach Cleaning

This Section is responsible for the continuous upkeep and cleaning of beaches in Gozo and Comino. This service was provided free of charge on the basis of a contractual agreement which covers 12 beaches in Gozo and three in Comino. During the summer months the cleaning of beaches was stepped up to Sundays and public holidays and additional afternoon rounds of refuse collection were carried out in Ramla, Marsalforn and Xlendi bays.

The employees of this Section were deployed to carry out general maintenance and embellishment works in the more popular tourist resorts of the island. Employees carried out maintenance and upgrading works on street and beach furniture including the installation of ladders in popular beaches to facilitate access to the sea.

An extensive clean-up of the lower part of Marsalforn valley was carried out last year in order to facilitate the flow of runoff rainwater and prevent flooding problems at M'Forn. The removal of seaweed and other litter from beaches was a major task for the Section during the past year.

SEWERAGE MASTER PLAN

All preparatory work (tendering, adjudication, permits and the actual award of the tender itself) in connection with the Wied il-Mielah (Gharb) pumping station project was completed in 2009. Works on the construction of the pumping station started in November 2009. Works on a 2.1 km stretch of the rising main commenced in October 2009 and good progress was registered.

AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES BRANCH

Veterinary Services

This section is responsible for the regulation of animal husbandry and slaughter in Gozo.

Civil Abattoir

- *Structural Work:* Structural work at the civil abattoir continued with a fast pace during 2009. Masonry work was carried out at the area where the cutting and chilling rooms will be situated. Other structural works and alterations were also carried out and various consultations on the technical aspects of the project were held.
- *Slaughter of Livestock:* Since the refurbishment process at the Gozo Civil Abattoir was still ongoing, the slaughter of live stock had to be carried out at the Civil Abattoir in Malta. The number of cattle slaughtered in Malta amounted to 1,329 heads, comprising 676 cows and 653 bulls. On the other hand, the number of swine slaughtered was 4,324; this represented a decrease of more than 1,070 heads over the previous year. All fallen animals, condemned meat and offal were disposed of by means of incineration at the Civil Abattoir premises.
- *Incinerator:* Dead animals are incinerated at the Civil Abattoir facilities. During the year, 718 bovines, 758 ovines, 16 equines and 581 pigs were incinerated. Another 44,848kgs of material were also disposed off by the same method. Various maintenance works were carried out on the incinerator, mainly by Civil Abattoir employees.

Field Work

All farms supplying milk to the Malta Dairy Products (MDP) were tested for TB, Brucellosis, Leukosis, Blue Tongue and BSE during 2009. Tests were carried out on 210 cattle herds as follows:

TB Tests	8,407
Brucella Tests	8,407
Leukosis	8,407
Blue Tongue	375
BSE	162

Additionally, TB/Brucella tests were also extended to farms which do not supply milk to the MDP. In all, 464 units were checked as follows:

Brucella tests on sheep	3,802
Brucella tests on goats	954

All blood tests were carried out at the Malta Diagnostic Laboratory as no adequate facilities exist at the Civil Abattoir laboratory in Gozo.

	Bovines	Sheep	Goats
MDP	8,407	0	0
Non-MDP	0	3,802	954

Another function of the unit is the tattooing and registration of pigs in Gozo. All pig units were inspected and a technical report and census made.

No. of tattoos (born)	5,680
Registration of Deaths	679
Registration of slaughtered animals	4,324

As in previous years, inspections were carried out on all poultry cutting establishments on a frequent basis. Emphasis was made with the owners of these establishments on the need to abide by the respective

regulations governing their trade. Poultry farms too were subjected to routine inspections. Prior to the slaughter of broilers an inspector carried out an exhaustive ante-mortem inspection to ensure that broilers were fit for consumption. Laboratory analyses were conducted on a regular basis on random samples of faeces and eggs collected from various units in order to detect any diseases at an early stage.

Mgarr Inspectorate

One of the main functions of the Mgarr Inspectorate is to prevent contagious diseases from reaching Gozo. In this regard, inspections were carried out on a shift basis during the entire week on vehicles crossing over to and from Malta. As in the previous year, extra care was taken by the Inspectorate not to allow certain palm trees from being brought over to Gozo in order to check the red palm weevil outbreak. Additionally, strict control and monitoring of the movement of animals between the islands was maintained.

Extension Service Division

During the year under review, dairy farmers sought advice from the Division on various matters concerning their industry. Farmers were given advice on methods of how to upgrade their farms to be in line with existing regulations. At times, employees from the Division conducted on-site inspections to be in a better position to assess farmers' needs. The Division liaised with MEPA on farm permits and plans on behalf of farmers and employees attended MEPA meetings to keep abreast of developments.

Prevention of Diseases

The Veterinary Services in Gozo take the necessary measures to monitor and control contagious diseases.

- *Salmonella* - All layer farms were inspected. Faeces and blood samples were taken and sent to the laboratory for analyses. One broiler farm was found positive for Salmonella and all birds present on the farm were culled and incinerated
- *Blue tongue disease* - In order to better control this disease, all farms on Gozo were divided into quadrants. Blood samples were periodically taken from four to six randomly chosen cattle farms and sent for laboratory analyses.
- *Rigid control of animal movement* - With the inter trace in place all animal movements were recorded and cross checked to see that all farms were disease free.

Gozo Marketing Centre

The total value of produce sold through the Gozo Marketing Centre during 2009 amounted to €182,028. This represents a very sharp decrease over the value of the previous year. However, one must take into consideration that the cooperative which used to operate in the centre pulled out of the premises at the end of January. Similarly, a decrease in weight of 1,534,316 kgs was registered.

Sale of Agricultural Produce through the Gozo Pitkali Centre				
	2008		2009	
	Kgs	€	Kgs	€
Pitkali	110,184	84,576	215,884	105,639
Co-operative	1,735,156	1,033,638	95,140	76,389
Totals	1,845,340	1,118,214	311,024	182,028

Gozitan farmers, apart from selling their produce in Gozo, also make use of the Marketing Centre in Malta. The total value of produce sold by Gozitan farmers through both Marketing Centres during 2009 reached the figure of €1,471,468, a decrease of €1,150,384 over the previous year.

The Gozo Marketing Centre is directly linked to the Pitkali Markets Management System (PMMS) in Malta. This enables instant inputting of data on deliveries by farmers, sales from each pitkali store and

issuing of invoices to farmers and greengrocers. Through this system, queries about deliveries and farmers' sales can be traced and checked from the Gozo Centre.

Afforestation, Parks and Public Gardens

The Afforestation, Parks and Public Gardens Section comprises three main units, namely, the Ornamental Nurseries, Afforestation and Villa Rundle Gardens and the Gozo General Hospital Gardens. The principal aims of this Section are to embellish and upgrade the rural and urban environment by increasing the number of trees and shrubs planted in open spaces and the propagation of endemic and indigenous species.

Afforestation

The Afforestation section is responsible for the maintenance of a number of public gardens in Gozo, namely Villa Rundle in Victoria, Ulysses Grove in Xewkija and Papa Ġwanni XXIII in Mgarr. It is also responsible for landscaping and upkeep of central strips, roundabouts, street verges and other soft areas.

During the past year, a total of 50,650 ornamental trees and shrubs and seasonal flowering plants propagated at the Department's own nurseries, were planted all over Gozo. These consisted of 50,133 bedding seasonal plants, 386 decorative, 22 medicinal and 109 standard trees.

During 2009, the Afforestation Section was involved in carrying out works such as weeding, soil cultivation and watering. Another function of the Unit is the pruning of trees and shrubs which was carried throughout the year. The Afforestation Section had some contractual obligations with five local councils namely, Munxar, Żebbuġ, Qala, Victoria and Ġhajnsielem in maintaining their soft areas. Income derived from these contracts amounted to €7,783 which is more than double the figure for 2008. Some 129 bags of logs together with palm fronds and olive leaves were sold to the general public netting €704.94 in revenue.

As in previous years, the Gozo Agricultural, Industrial and Cultural Show and the Flower Show were held at the Villa Rundle Gardens in August and in May respectively.

Nurseries

The Agriculture Branch runs two ornamental nurseries namely, Tad-Dawwara and Tal-Ħlewwa which are situated at Victoria and Kerċem respectively. During the year, thousands of decorative trees, shrubs and seasonal flowering bedding plants were propagated in these nurseries and an extra effort was made to propagate indigenous species such as carob and olive trees. Production is principally intended for use at the Department's afforestation sites, public gardens as well as central strips and roundabouts. As indicated in the previous section, a total of 50,650 plants were supplied for afforestation use in 2009.

The nurseries supplied plants and shrubs to a trial project within the Ministry for Gozo. intended to reclaim abandoned land, prevent soil erosion and embellish the environment. Additionally, 4,525 plants, mostly seasonal, were donated to various local councils, schools and NGOs.

These nurseries supplied hundreds of potted plants on return basis to various entities in order to embellish their premises when holding cultural and similar activities. During 2009, this unit embarked on a drive to increase the propagation of seasonal plants. In fact, the number of plants produced almost doubled that of the previous year.

Although the number of trees and shrubs sold during 2009 increased over 2008, there was a decrease in revenue. The table below shows revenue and trees sold during the last three years. Revenue from sales of ornamental trees and shrubs (841 plants, 279 standard trees, 287 decorative and 142 medicinal) to the general public amounted to €2,451.

Gozo General Hospital Gardens

Employees from this Section pruned trees, hedges and shrubs and cleared debris and weeds from the GGH gardens. Other works carried out in these gardens included the planting of bedding plants, which were propagated at the Dawwara nursery, watering and the cultivation of soil.

Government Experimental Farm

The Government Experimental Farm is mainly concerned with the cultivation of crops and trees using modern techniques. Crops are cultivated both in the open and in glasshouses.

Protected Cropping

Protected cropping at the Government Experimental Farm was carried out in three metal glasshouses and two poly-tunnels, none of which is heated. In 2009, trials in respect of the following vegetables were made: Aubergines (Vizir, Rondona, Tirrenia); Green peppers (Maccabi, Eurostar, Adina, Peppone); Cucumbers (Marumba, Alcor, Civan); Vegetable marrow (Sabra, Goet, Blanquita, Zu 1114); and Tomatoes (Ombretta, Yarlin, Combat, Milas, Tibet, Fiamma). A second crop of melons and watermelons was sown in spring of 2009 after the harvest of cucumbers and marrows. Melon varieties included the Magdemon (9,135 and 9,320) whilst Audrey and Premium were the varieties used in watermelons. Harvesting was carried out in summer.

In 2009, 552kgs of vegetable marrows, 587kgs of peppers, 3,452kgs of tomatoes, 1,401kgs of cucumbers, 606kgs of aubergines, 584kgs of melons and 288kgs of watermelons were harvested for a total value of €4,919.

Soil solarisation was practised in all greenhouses during the summer months. Since in 2009, there was a severe outbreak of *Tuta absoluta* on tomatoes, pheromone traps were used to control this severe pest. Unfortunately this has caused severe losses in the production of tomatoes during the latter stages of growth. Insect nets were placed on the openings of the tunnels for the new crop which was planted in autumn 2009, to prevent the entrance of this pest in the tunnels. New pheromone traps were also placed.

Sale of Vegetable Seedlings, Fruits and Fruit Trees

In 2009, more than 54,000 cauliflower, onion and cabbage seedlings were sold to local farmers and amateurs. Some artichoke seedlings were also sold to the general public. A small amount of soft fruit, mainly nectarines, apricots and plums as well as 615kgs of citrus fruit comprising lemons, oranges, and tangerines were sold.

During the year, there was a large demand for the purchase of fruit trees by the public. In fact, 337 fruit trees, mainly nectarines, peaches, plums, apricots, pomegranate, *bambinella* and figs as well as 217 rootstocks were purchased from the farm. The total amount of revenue generated from these sales reached €1,534. Additionally, another 191 trees valued at €783 were bought by the public from the Government Experimental Farm after the official booking orders closed down.

Livestock and Birds Section

The Government Experimental Farm houses some animals notably sheep, goats, ducks, and hens. The purpose of holding these animals is to educate school children in connection with the Hands-on Farming Programme. During the year under review, some pure rabbits were obtained from Ghammieri, Marsa so that production of pure bred rabbits can be started at the Farm. The Government Farm is also responsible for the carrying out of the Captive Breeding Programme which consists of rearing finches in captivity. At the end of 2009, a stock of 13 greenfinches, 10 chaffinches, four gold finches, four serin, four siskin and eight linnets was kept. Six greenfinches and one chaffinch were sold for €151.

Fields

In 2009, an artichoke trial was carried out. The scope of this trial was to produce early artichokes for export. However, due to the limitation of water supplies at the farm, harvesting did not start as early as expected. Further trials on this variety are underway. In 2009, there were more than 2,600 artichoke heads which were sold at the local market for a total value of €435.

Trials were also carried out on local varieties of broad beans, melons and watermelons. The broad bean trial was quite successful. One trial involving melons and watermelons was carried out without the use of irrigation as used to be done in the past. Unfortunately this trial did not prove to be successful since plants remained small and production was minimal due to lack of water. Another trial on the same plant species was carried out; in this case plants were irrigated and no pesticides were used except sulphur. This trial too yielded a rather poor product since plants were severely affected by pests and diseases.

In 2009, a fodder trial was also carried out on new varieties of wheat (two varieties) and barley (one variety). About 20 tumoli of land were propagated with wheat and this was sold by tender. The amount obtained was €2,020. A further four tumoli of wheat were kept to harvest seeds to be sown the next season while the straw will be used as fodder for animals.

Visits

During the year under review various visits were conducted at the Government Experimental Farm. The new Permanent Secretary, the Minister for Gozo, the Director of the Institute for Agriculture and a delegation from the UOM visited the premises. Several farmers visited the premises to seek advice on various matters related to their trade.

Other work/activities

- Efforts were made so as to make minimum use of pesticides. Soil sterilisation was carried out in greenhouses to minimise the risk of soil borne diseases thus reducing the amount of pesticides added to the soil. Fruit fly traps were placed in the citrus orchards to attract and kill fruit flies thus avoiding the extensive use of insecticides and sprays. Bumble bees were introduced in greenhouses to enhance pollination.
- Scions from the old pear trees that were present in the area that was taken for the extension of the cemetery were grafted on pear rootstocks so that a new stock of these old pear varieties would be propagated.
- The Red Cross branch in Gozo started to use the new Afforestation garages as their new premises for a temporary period.
- A group of foreign students visited the centre at the request of Żabbar Local Council.
- During 2009, a number of fruit trees were donated to various entities including Victoria Police station, Dawwara Nursery, Gozo Ministry, the Ministry for Resources and Rural Affairs, Civil Protection and the Capuchin Friars.

Land and Water Use Section

One of the functions of this section is the monitoring and preservation of soil resources in accordance with the Fertile Soil Preservation Act of 1973. When soil has to be removed, normally prior to commencement of construction works, officers from this section call on site to ascertain that all fertile soil is removed and kept in storage or is used to reclaim poor land, in gardens and fields. During the year, this section processed 40 applications for the removal of approximately 6,104 cubic metres of soil.

This Section is also responsible for the issuing of transportation permits to farmers, fishermen, couriers, egg and poultry and pig breeders to carry their produce free of charge to Malta and carried on-site

assessments in connection with the compensation for damages to crops and lands. Additionally, land inspections were carried out in connection with applications for development permits and repair of rubble walls.

During 2009, this section received 54 applications for the purchase of fruit trees and vine rootling and issued licences to five commercial vintners which between them pressed some 215,222 kgs of grapes. Additionally, during the year, six applications were received for Apiculture Aid Assistance and 17 beekeepers were inspected.

Integrated Administration and Control System (IACS)

The main function of the Integrated Administrative and Control System (IACS) is to register and keep records of land under cultivation and to support farmers in their bid to access the various schemes which may be available.

Land Parcel Identification System (LPIS)

The LPIS is a computerised system in which data pertaining to all land under cultivation is inputted. The LPIS is continuously updated through adjustments of land ownership transfers and the registration of new land. Site plans of all parcels of land under cultivation are kept in order to facilitate identification. As of 2009, improvements in the LPIS made it possible to supply farmers with an ortophoto image of their parcels and a certificate listing the parcels owned and cultivated by the respective farmers. This Unit dealt with and solved a number of problems regarding the overlapping and incorrect location of land. Some problems which could not be solved by the Unit were forwarded to the Board of Disputes.

Farmer's Aid Applications

During 2009, the following aid schemes were made available to farmers: Arable Aid; Fruit and Vegetables for Production; Fruit and Tomatoes for Processing; Autochthonous; Vines; and Less Favoured Area.

The Unit received 1,239 applications from 142 full-time farmers and 1,097 part-time farmers for the above mentioned schemes. It is to be borne in mind that a single application can be made out for more than one aid scheme. Payments to farmers were effected under the Single Payment System. This scheme establishes the financial aid payable to farmers and is divided in two sections, namely, authorised entitlements and normal entitlements. Authorised entitlements are intended for the horticulture sector which includes all vegetables and tomatoes for processing. Normal entitlements cover arable land, set-aside fields and olive tree fields. Fruit and vine trees were not included in this scheme.

The Agri-Environment Measures (AEMS) which were introduced under the Rural Development Plan for 2007–2013 (Axis II) were also available during 2009. These measures are aimed to protect and enhance the environment through good agricultural practices particularly the good use of pesticides and herbicides. Farmers can apply for financial assistance in respect of the following measures:

- AEM 1: Use of environmentally friendly plant protection product in vineyards
- AEM 2: Traditional cultivation of silla through crop rotation
- AEM 3: Low input farming
- AEM 4: Suppress the use of herbicides in vineyards and fruit orchards
- AEM 5: Establishment and maintenance of conservation buffer strips
- AEM 6: Conservation of rural structures providing a natural habitat for fauna and flora
- AEM 7: Providing a healthy forage for bees
- AEM 8: Support for Organic Farming
- AEM 9: Support for Conservation of species in danger of genetic erosion.

The Modernisation of Agricultural Holdings is another measure under the European Agriculture Funds for Rural Development (EARDF) benefitting farmers. This measure was introduced in mid-December 2008

and is intended to enhance improvement and innovation in production methods, development and diversification of local products and the encouragement for the use of new technologies. The measure is sub-divided as follows:

- general modernisation and improvements in the performance of agricultural holdings
- environmental investments
- on-farm investments that aid farmers to conform with Community standards.

Sixty-seven applications were received under this measure which closed on 31 January 2009.

The Control Unit

This Unit is responsible for the carrying out of on-the-spot checks in order to verify that declarations made by farmers actually agree with what is found on the spot. During the year under review, employees from the Control Unit (Paying Agency MRRA) selected in a random method a number of parcels of land for inspection. Some parcels were inspected on the spot, whereas other parcels used mainly for arable crop, were inspected by remote sensing. The information gathered from inspections was inputted into a computerised system and resulting anomalies were addressed.

Other office work carried out during 2009 included the registration of new farmers and the updating of farmers' registration cards (FRCs) in a computerised database. The unit also processed applications, referred to it by MEPA, for the development of agricultural land.

Fisheries Section

- *Fishing population:* During 2009 the number of registered fishermen stood at 421, seven of who are full-time fishermen.

<i>Fishermen</i>	<i>2008</i>	<i>2009</i>
Full-time	93	100
Part-time	154	143
Recreational	156	178
Total	403	421

- *Licences:* 30 fishermen were given a licence to lay *kannizzati* in three districts as follows - Xlendi (19); Marsalforn (9); Mġarr-Grigal (2). In addition five full-time fishermen were issued with tuna fishing licences while set surface long line licences (*irmigġi*) were issued to six full-time fishermen.
- *Crafts:* The bulk of the fishing vessels are located at Mġarr Harbour whereas Marsalforn, Xlendi and Dwejra Bays hold smaller numbers. A very small percentage of vessels are distributed in other small bays.
- *Maintenance works:* During 2009, maintenance and repair works were carried out on the electric winches at Mġarr, Marsalforn and Xlendi Bays while sundry maintenance work was carried out on all other winches located in various bays. Other works included the changing of berthing rings and the cleaning of sand in front of the slipway at Mġarr Harbour, replacement of fenders on Xlendi Bay quay and the replacement of sleepers at Marsalforn main slipway. Additionally, regular inspections were carried out in all fishing centres. Palm fronds were distributed to full-time fishermen in August.

JOSEPH PORTELLI

Director (Projects and Development)

EU Affairs, Policy Development & Programme Implementation Directorate

The EU Affairs, Policy Development and Programme Implementation Directorate incorporates the management of aspects relating to EU affairs, domestic and EU related policy development and programme implementation.

The overall objectives of the Directorate are:

- managing the Ministry’s participation in EU structures and processes, as well as, ensuring effective coordination of EU-related matters at a domestic level and with other EU stakeholders;
- coordinating the formulation of the Ministry’s position on domestic policies and those proposed by the EU;
- facilitating the implementation of the Ministry’s policies and strategies;
- carrying out SPO functions for EU co-funded projects and initiatives; and
- monitoring the implementation of programmes and projects including Customer Care.

EU AFFAIRS

Management of EU Funds

The Directorate manages the EU funds allocated to projects being implemented by the Ministry, in particular, managing the implementation of EU financed/co-financed projects to successful completion. Throughout the past year, the Directorate continued to work closely with the project leaders who were leading the implementation of EU funded/co-financed projects, providing guidance and support on an ongoing basis and ensuring that funds are utilised in an effective manner and disbursed in accordance with regulations and established procedures. The Directorate continued to fulfil the role of Senior Programming Officer for the projects led by the Ministry for Gozo.

The Directorate also sourced opportunities for the co-financing of projects that contribute to Gozo’s socio-economic development. It secured co-financing for six projects, four under ERDF and two under ESF. Three other project proposals (one under ERDF and two under EAFRD) were submitted for potential EU co-financing. The Directorate also worked on the preparation of other project proposals that will be submitted for potential EU co-financing in due course. Furthermore, guidance and assistance was provided to line departments and interested parties including, local councils, NGOs, private sector organisations and individuals on the application for funds under different funding instruments.

Dissemination of Information

An important function of this office is the provision of assistance, advice and the dissemination of information on EU-related matters to line departments and interested parties, including NGOs, private sector organisations and the general public. This Directorate receives a significant number of queries, as well as requests for information. Queries arise from both internal and external stakeholders for which the Directorate responds expeditiously. Besides the extensive use of e-mail to inform identified internal/external stakeholders, this office holds meetings with these stakeholders as may be required. It also maintains contact with a number of officials from regions of other EU member states through CPMR. This has created a two way information exchange channel with this Directorate.

POLICY COORDINATION AND DEVELOPMENT

During 2009, the Directorate continued to manage the Ministry's participation in EU structures and processes as well as, ensuring effective coordination of EU-related matters at a domestic level and with other EU stakeholders. It continued to monitor on a continuous basis EU developments, in particular, Commission and Council proposals in the areas of relevance to this Ministry's portfolio including regional policy, state aids, environment, tourism, human resources, and business support, in order to coordinate the formulation of domestic policies in these areas. In fact, it has provided input to various EU proposals and communications that were of relevance to the Ministry's portfolio. It also provided input to the consultation process that the Commission for the Peripheral and Maritime Regions of Europe (CPMR) carries out on EU communications and proposals that are of relevance to island regions like Gozo. The Directorate was also instrumental in initiating internal debate and consultations with the relevant stakeholders on these areas which are of crucial importance to Gozo.

PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

The Directorate continued to coordinate the implementation of the Ministry's programmes and projects. It held meetings with the relevant officials and stakeholders to ensure effective implementation. To manage the EU co-financed projects effectively, it worked in close co-operation with the project leaders who are leading the implementation of the projects for which the Ministry is final beneficiary. These include:

- Upgrading of Villa Rundle Gardens;
- Reconstruction of part of Xlendi and Ta' Pinu roads;
- Upgrading of the Operating Theatre and Setting up of a Radiology Unit at the Gozo General Hospital;
- Upgrading of Żewwieqa Waterfront;
- Training Courses to Enhance the Employability and Adaptability of the Workforce;
- Higher Education Courses to Address Skill Mismatches in Gozo.

The Directorate continued to monitor the implementation of the project entitled *Master Plan for the Ċittadella - the Old Fortified City of the Island of Gozo*, co-financed under the EEA Financial mechanism which is still under way. This is expected to be completed by April 2010.

The Directorate also monitors the preparation/implementation of projects that other ministries and public entities will be implementing in Gozo through its participation in committee meetings and by maintaining close contacts with the ministries/entities concerned.

National Reform Programme

Under the National Reform Programme for 2008-2010, this Directorate identified, developed and continually monitored the implementation of measures/initiatives under different priority areas, namely, Education, Training, Health, Environment and Tourism aimed to support Gozo's socio-economic development.

Green Initiatives

The Directorate, in collaboration with the Ministry's Green Leader, continued to pursue a number of green initiatives for the reduction, re-use and recycling of waste generated within the Ministry, including waste separation and alternative energy generation within the Ministry's administrative block. During the past year, other initiatives aimed to reduce consumption of resources, in particular energy and water, were introduced and are actively being followed.

Customer Care Co-ordination

Quality Service Standards

The Charter Support Unit, in collaboration with this Directorate, conducted a compliance audit of the 12 quality service charters currently in place in different sections within this Ministry. The audit report is being analysed by the respective directors for eventual feedback to this office.

This Directorate continued to monitor adherence to the new service standards introduced in 2006, which are in place in those sections where there is no quality service charter. This office maintains regular contact with the line managers responsible for service standards in each department to ensure their effective implementation.

Queries/Complaints Handling

During 2009, the Directorate handled 537 queries, complaints and requests for assistance of a generic, as well as, of a specific nature, received through the electronic system, via e-mail, telephones and walk-ins. Most of these queries/complaints were dealt with expeditiously with responses provided either through the Customer Care System (CCS) or through e-mail. In most cases, responses were supplemented by direct telephone contact. The majority of the walk-ins were provided with immediate response.

The Directorate continued to carry out an in-depth analysis of the queries, complaints and requests forwarded to it and subsequently took the following initiatives to improve upon the existing system:

- Continued to maintain ongoing coordination with local councils in Gozo. This has led to improved efficiency and effectiveness in the complaints forwarded to the Ministry;
- Kept contact with officials from OPM to provide user input in connection with the redevelopment of the CCS system, to help reduce bottlenecks and improve its functionality, as well as to improve upon the system's effectiveness in the delivery of customer complaints to the appropriate ministry/entity;
- After coordinating two training sessions held in November 2008 by OPM for CCS users in Gozo, the department felt the necessity to hold further training sessions to ensure effective use of the system. Hands-on training of the redeveloped CCS system organised by the Charter Support Unit in collaboration with this office is envisaged to be carried out in the first quarter of 2010.

RITA CUTAJAR

Director (EU Affairs, Policy Development & Programme Implementation)

**Ministry for Infrastructure,
Transport & Communications**

The image features a minimalist, abstract design. The background is composed of several overlapping, semi-transparent shapes in shades of beige and light blue. On the right side, there is a vertical strip of a darker blue color, which contains a stylized, white, curved shape that resembles a letter 'C' or a similar symbol. The overall aesthetic is clean and modern.

Permanent Secretariat

OVERVIEW

The Office of the Permanent Secretary plays a crucial role in the implementation of Government's agenda for the Ministry for Infrastructure, Transport & Communications (MITC) by ensuring the provision of relevant, effective and timely policy advice and general management support and policy implementation capabilities for purposes of enabling the fulfilment of such agenda. Within this context, the Office of the Permanent Secretary provides leadership and general coordination of the operations of the following MITC departments and entities:

- Departments/Directorates - Corporate Services Directorate, Policy Development Directorate, Programme Implementation Directorate, EU Affairs Directorate, Information Management Unit, Government Services Unit, Project Development & Coordination Unit, Land & Public Registry Division and Civil Aviation Division.
- Entities - Malta Information Technology Agency (MITA), Malta Maritime Authority, Malta Freeport Corporation, Malta Transport Authority, Network Infrastructure Directorate, Malta Communications Authority, Malta Shipyards, Water Services Corporation, Enemalta Corporation and Grand Harbour Regeneration Corporation.

GOVERNMENT SERVICES UNIT (GSU)

During 2009 the Government Services Unit's objectives remained focused towards:

- the provision of a single point of reference from which Government Services may be sourced;
- the identification, review, and adjustment of those operational structures and activities that are necessary for the provision of Government Services in a manner that meets client expectations and conforms to legislative and administrative requirements and generally leads to the delivery of more efficient and effective Government Services.

To this end, during the year it completed the first part of its remit with the delivery of the remaining service level agreements and this well within the established timeframes. As a result, by end year, GSU had set up service level agreements with 23 operational areas comprising no less than 71 services.

Service level agreements all reflect the established target of 10 working days or less, with most being negotiated within an acceptable process flow and a time commitment that is considerably better than the established target of 10 working days.

This represents the attainment of GSU's primary objective of setting up an administrative one-stop-shop for the provision of services to business entities operating from, or seeking to operate from, the Maltese Islands.

In this context, towards the latter part of the year the GSU also compiled and submitted information dossiers relevant to specific areas at the request of its primary client, this being Smart City Malta.

Following from this and in line with established direction, it is intended that the management of the service level agreements entered into by GSU would be handed over to Malta Enterprise with effect from January 2010.

PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS UNIT

This unit plays a very important role in enabling Parliamentary scrutiny over the workings of the Ministry for Infrastructure, Transport & Communications, by facilitating the timely preparation of replies to questions put in Parliament by members of the House of Representatives. During 2009 this unit handled no less than 1,650 Parliamentary Questions, each involving careful research into past similar questions and background information and continual liaison and collaboration with Ministry departments and entities and vetting of draft responses for consistency and completeness.

LEGAL AFFAIRS UNIT

The legal office within the Permanent Secretariat was set up in the second quarter of 2009 to provide legal assistance to the administration and departments falling under MITC. This assistance is given in various forms, such as legal advice, drafting of both primary and subsidiary legislation where requested, legal and linguistic clearance of EU related documents, vetting of draft legislation prepared by entities falling under the Ministry, and of agreements and contracts. Also the legal office follows and assists in court cases initiated against the Ministry. In fact, it handles legal/court matters together with the office of the Attorney General, provides legal adviser and officials concerned with all legal documents received, and follows up each case to ensure that the appropriate action is being taken. It also implements other tasks as required.

The legal office was involved in the drafting of some of the subsidiary legislation which had to be prepared by entities falling under the Ministry in order to implement the Services Directive.

The following legislation relating to sectors falling under the Ministry was published in 2009:

- Bill entitled the Malta Transport (Regulatory) Authority Act, 2009
- Bill entitled the Communications Laws (Amendment) Act, 2009
- Bill entitled the Motor Vehicles Registration and Licensing Act and Other Laws (Amendment) Act, 2009
- An ACT entitled the Motor Vehicles Registration Tax (Amendment) Act, 2009
- An Act entitled the Authority for Transport in Malta Act, 2009
- Motor Vehicles (Driving Licences) (Amendment) Regulations, 2009
- Passenger Transport Services Regulations, 2009
- Omnibuses (Amendment) Regulations, 2009
- Traffic Signs And Carriageway Markings (Amendment) Regulations, 2009
- Gozo Services Motor Omnibuses (Amendment) Regulations, 2009
- Scheduled and Unscheduled Public Transport Services (Amendment) Regulations, 2009
- Motor Vehicles (Carriage of Passengers by Road) (Revocation) Regulations, 2009
- Motor Vehicles (Registration and Licensing) (Amendment) Regulations, 2009
- Malta Transport Authority (Enforcement Officers) (Amendment) Regulations, 2009
- Public Service Garage Licences (Revocation) Regulations, 2009
- Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Regulations, 2009
- Polling (Restriction of Access) Regulations, 2009
- Exemption from Motor Vehicles Registration Tax Rules, 2009
- Clamping and Removal of Motor Vehicles and Encumbering Objects (Amendment) Regulations, 2009
- Registration and Licensing of Motor Vehicles Regulations, 2009
- Controlled Parking Schemes (Residents and Commercial) (Amendment) Regulations, 2009
- Motor Vehicles (Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road) (Amendment) Regulations, 2009
- Passenger Transport Services (Amendment) Regulations, 2009
- Merchant Shipping (Liability for Bunker Oil Pollution Damage) Regulations, 2009
- Merchant Shipping (Fees) (Amendment) Regulations, 2009
- Yachting Centres (Amendment) Regulations, 2009
- Water Taxi Services Regulations, 2009
- Port Workers (Amendment) Regulations, 2009
- Small Ships (Amendment) Regulations, 2009
- Maritime Pilotage (Amendment) Regulations, 2009

The Unit is also involved, together with other directorates from the Ministry, in the BLUE MED project, which pursues the implementation of a functional airspace block in the South East Mediterranean Area in accordance with the requirements of the Single European Sky legislation with Cyprus, Greece, Italy and Malta being the beneficiaries to same. Also, there are other participant countries to the project. Officials from the legal office attend meetings both locally and abroad and contribute to the deliverables for the project which at the moment is in its Definition phase.

JOHN GATT

Permanent Secretary (MITC)

Corporate Services Directorate

OVERVIEW

The role of the Corporate Services Directorate (CSD) is that of providing essential support services to departments and entities falling within the Ministry for Infrastructure, Transport & Communications across a range of corporate functions including finance and administration (accounts, procurement, asset management, human resources, registry services and health and safety). Mention should also be made of the addition of the PQ Section, which as of this year, has been posted under this Directorate so as to enhance and ensure timely and comprehensive response to the questions tabled in respect to the Ministry and its portfolio. The CSD is, in terms of the Radiocommunications Act, also assigned responsibility for broadcast receiving apparatus which mainly relates to the licensing of televisions as managed by the Television Licensing Unit.

The directorate also provides support services to the various secretariats, directorates, authorities, corporations and other entities falling within the MITC's portfolio in matters related to financial planning, public procurement, travel abroad on official business, and recruitment.

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

To the extent that finances are needed to secure the successful implementation of the various activities within the MITC's portfolio of responsibilities, it can be said that management of the Ministry's finances is the most important role of the CSD. The directorate handles all financial matters related to the Minister's Secretariat, the Office of the Permanent Secretary, EU Affairs Directorate, the Programme Implementation Directorate, the Policy Development Directorate and also the Project Development & Coordination Unit. It also offers support services to the Civil Aviation Department and the Land & Public Registry Division. In this context, as in previous years, the CSD coordinated the Ministry's 2009 Revised Estimates exercise as well as the preparation of the Business and Financial Plans for 2010.

During 2009, the CSD also managed requests for the release of approved Capital and Recurrent budgetary subventions and other financial allocations submitted by Ministry entities including Enemalta Corporation, Water Services Corporation, Malta Freeport Corporation, Malta Shipyards, Grand Harbour Regeneration Corporation and the Malta Communications Authority, the Malta Maritime Authority, the Malta Transport Authority and Malta Information Technology Agency.

During 2009, the directorate was also involved in:

- leading and enhancing the process of awarding tenders and direct orders;
- compiling information related to the drafting of replies to Parliamentary Questions;
- coordinating replies to several requests and queries from the Office of the Prime Minister, Ministry of Finance, the Treasury, National Audit Office and the Internal Audit and Investigations Directorate. The CSD also took the necessary action, following the auditor's report to improve governance of the revenue accounts pertaining to the Main Sewer Contribution and the Road Infrastructure Contribution. Action was also taken to introduce a tracking system whereby any government-owned or private rented property is tracked in terms on rent payable and applicable payments.
- assisting in the preparation of travel documents required by the Ministry's officials when travelling abroad on official business;

- monitoring expenditure from capital, recurrent and other approved financial allocations to ensure full compliance with financial regulations;
- starting a process with the aim to better define the roles and tasks of the Directorate's employees. Such a process will enable a more strategic review of the organisational set-up of the Directorate with a view to enhancing outputs and deliverables capabilities. It is aimed that this exercise is closed and implemented in 2010;
- assisting the Public Registry and Civil Registration Departments in the complex exercise that saw their archives being relocated to the new stores in Valletta, an exercise that required substantial effort in terms of planning of all logistics, transfer of all office equipment and ensuring business continuity;
- assisting the Permanent Secretary and contributing to the collective management of the Ministry by providing personnel to serve as chairman or members in several interviewing boards, tender evaluation committees and carrying out the role of financial controller for the Blue-Med EU Programme.

HUMAN RESOURCES

During 2009, the CSD continued to liaise with the various MITC departments and entities for purposes of ensuring the effective implementation of corporate human resource policies, systems and procedures as set by Government. The Human Resources Section also provided the necessary support for the recruitment of new personnel at the MITC's departments and entities by compiling and issuing calls for applications as appropriate or otherwise by channelling requests to the apposite approving authorities. During 2009 a number of call for applications were issued to fill vacancies of assistant director positions within MITC's directorates that had come up for renewal. This was a direct consequence of a capacity building exercise carried out by MITC and OPM during 2008.

During 2009 the Human Resources Section was also responsible for ensuring that all paperwork necessary for staff progressions was completed on time apart from following up the compilation of staff performance management reports and plans.

Training

In 2009, several employees were encouraged and offered the chance to attend training seminars organised by the Staff Development Organisation and other private training institutions. The Directorate also supported members of the staff in undertaking diploma courses by providing part-financing. On-the-job training was also encouraged via the involvement of several officers in the various Ministry initiatives including those related to gender equality and occupational health and safety issues. One has to also mention the training in public procurement, whereby officers were trained in the subject, first to strengthen the operational aspect of the subject, and second, as an anticipation to the upcoming changes in the Public Procurement Regulations, whereby the role of the Ministry will become more sensitive and important during the awarding stage of public tenders.

REGISTRY SERVICES

Registry services are another core function of the CSD, in that it ensures the proper recording, tracking and retrieval of all correspondence received at MITC head office and its directorates. Without such registry services, operational functions would be seriously disrupted. The Registry Section utilises a corporate computerised Document Registry System to acknowledge and track correspondence and files throughout the whole operational system. During 2009 the section handled no less than 875 incoming correspondence that was duly acknowledged, inserted in appropriate file and forwarded to the appropriate service delivery desk. A total of 846 new files were also created, besides several other sub-files.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY

During 2009 the Corporate Services Directorate continued to improve on Health and Safety issues and proceeded to install a fire alarm and introduce fire drills on a regular basis, apart from carrying out several tests and checks on the Ministry's equipment and buildings so as to ensure proper adherence to the regulations and legislation and a safer environment for staff.

TELEVISION LICENSING UNIT

The Television Licensing Unit (TLU) is the only non-corporate function falling within the CSD in that it performs a line department role and more specifically the issuance of licences and collection of relative annual fees for broadcast receiving apparatus (mainly televisions). Until 2004, this role was performed by the Public Broadcasting Services Ltd but was then transferred to the Director Corporate Services of the ministry responsible for communications by virtue of a legal notice under the Radiocommunications Act.

The TLU manages over 120,000 television licences and collects an average of €4.8 million yearly in licensing fees. For this purpose, the TLU operates a fee collection service that has been sub-contracted to Maltapost so as to ensure an easier and more convenient licence payment facility to customers. Subsequent to the general elections, and in view of Government's electoral promise to do away with television licences, during 2009 the TLU experienced a considerable increase in defaulters and concomitant reduction in fees collected, since many licences assumed that the fee was no longer payable. To counter this downward movement and enhance revenue collection, the TLU undertook an arrears collection drive during which no less than 35,000 reminders were sent to defaulting licensees.

The collection capability of the TLU was also rendered less effective as a consequence of loose legal provisions whereby licensees declaring to have had their television destroyed years back were allowed to waive the relative fees with back-dated effective rather than from date of declaration. The Unit observed that this was causing a number of licensees to declare back-dated destruction of television sets to avoid paying pending licence fees. To counter this trend, and following the Attorney General's advice, a legal notice was issued providing for a tighter provision of law in that such declarations will only have effect from the date of declaration and not retroactively. This stopped a possible haemorrhage of outstanding licensing fees.

In order to be more accessible to the general public and its clients, the TLU was relocated to its current offices in St Paul Street, Valletta. Apart from this, the TLU has embarked on a drive to collect arrears by issuing several reminders to its clients. The TLU also effected several telephone calls to its clients, whereby the Unit managed to increase the revenue by way of flexible repayments arrangements.

It is envisaged that, due to the inherent action-response lag, the results of the foregoing efforts by the TLU will spill over into 2010. Nonetheless the revenue collected in 2009 was nearly €3,300,000.

DENNIS ATTARD
Director (Corporate Services)

Information Management Unit

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

The year 2009 was an assiduous year in the ICT arena. Other than the planned ICT projects and the day-to-day governance, a lot happened, which will shape the future of the ICT within Government. Much of the focus was on the 2009 - 2012 National ICT Strategy, which was launched by the Minister during the November National Information Society Advisory Council (NISCO).

CORE SERVICES CONTRACT

The Core Services Contract (CSC) is a contractual obligation for the delivery of core ICT services between, on one hand MITC on behalf of the Government and, on the other hand, the Malta Information Technology Agency (MITA). This is an annual rolling contract that is calendar-year based and was initiated on 1 January 2006, and covers the period ending December 2015. The contract places MITA as the core technology and operational driver responsible for the provision of core services to all line ministries and public entities as well as for the management, development and compliance monitoring of the ICT governance function besides being the primary technology and ICT operations adviser. The Core Services Contract incorporates a total of 25 core services covering ICT infrastructure (such as e-Government, Internet and network implementation), business and operational efficiency (such as quality assurance, disaster recovery and consultancy) and maintenance and support of corporate and strategic application software.

As announced during the November 2009 NISCO, MITA will further focus on the 2009 - 2012 National ICT Strategy, which was set out in The Smart Island Strategy, primarily in Strategic Streams 3, 4, 5 and 7. The Strategy encapsulates the desired state of the various facets of the Maltese information society and economy, carved within the overall aspiration of harnessing knowledge to enhance citizens' quality of life, to transform the economy into one based on knowledge and to take public service delivery into a new paradigm driven by citizen-centricity.

INTEGRATION OF THE TRANSPORT SERVICES

During 2009, the new Authority for Transport in Malta (Transport Malta – TM) was set up to integrate all aspects of transport under one organisation. The IMU was assigned the task to create one holistic website which will project a consolidated presence for the Land, Air and Sea transport sectors. This was to include the major services which were being provided by the Transport Authority, Maritime Authority and Civil Aviation. The look and feel and the branding of the new authority were included in the web services which are being provided to the citizen.

TM Internal Communications

The IMU was also requested to coordinate a cohesive communication system for the new set-up. All outposts were linked together using VoIP technology. Other communication services such as e-mail, web presence, etc were amalgamated.

PC LEASING PROGRAMME

During 2008, the Government of Malta, through MITC, embarked on the implementation of a PC leasing framework within the Public Service and government schools. The objective is to have a more efficient and effective ICT service by implementing a programme entailing the replacement of existing equipment through the deployment, under title of lease, of personal computers and laptops as well as the provision of maintenance and support services to all workstations across the Public Service, including the government schools.

During 2009 MITC completed this exercise. All knowledge workers are now being serviced by a third party contractor while continuing to be consolidated within the Government framework.

E-GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Early in 2009, MITC forwarded the responsibility of the e-Gov Alliance Agreement (an enabling contract entered into with a number of business partners), to MITA. The respective funds and contracts were also transferred for all the in-progress projects which included:

Owner	e-Gov Application
OPM	Application for Permits and Notifications – MEPA
OPM	eGov - Recruitment Portal for the Public Sector
MJHA	eGov - Judiciary Portal
MJHA	Online Aviation Security Services
MEYE	National Archives project
MFIN	All Warrants Portal
MSOC	Online Application for Pensions
MSOC	eHealth portal services Phase II
MJHA	Police Conduct Certificates
MRRA	Agricultural related services including Livestock
MFIN	MSA Portal
MCMP	Online Registration of Patents and Trademarks
MJHA	Police Portal
OPM	Customer care of One Government.
MITC	Enemalta online services
MJHA	Malta Arbitration Centre
MITC	MITC New Portal Phase 2
MEYE	National Commission for Higher Education (NCHE)
MFA	Notifications Alert Portal
MITC	Certificates Portal
MITC	Roads Permits System - NID (ADT)

MITC E-GOVERNMENT SERVICES

During 2009, MITC carried out various initiatives to enhance its e-Gov services and thus keep up with the technological requirements while servicing the citizen in a more efficient and effective manner. For this reason, MITC engaged in developing a template mechanism, a Content Management System (CMS) with the scope of having one centralised source of information, managed via one powerful and robust CMS with a cost-effective solution. MITC required a new template solution system in order to allow the Ministry to create different web portals within the MITC website. These templates will specifically be used to create an online presence for a number of departments which fall within the Ministry's portfolio.

Type	Entity / Department	Link
Gov Sites:	Malta Transport	www.transport.gov.mt
	BAAI	www.baai.gov.mt
	Passports Office	www.passaporti.gov.mt
Non-Gov Sites:	Euro Label Malta (MCA)	www.eurolabel.gov.mt
	ICT for ALL (MCA)	www.ictforall.org.mt
NGO's	Dar tal-Providenza	www.dartalprovidenza.org
	Puttinu Cares Foundation	www.puttinucares.org
Planned	Land and Public Registries	
	Marriage Registry	
	GHRC	

ASSIGNMENT AND MONITORING OF THE 116 HARMONISED EUROPEAN SHORT CODES (HESC)

The European Commission designated a harmonised range of 6-digit telephone numbers beginning with 116 to be used for accessing the same services of social value across Europe. According to Article 2 of the Commission Decision, this type of service should meet a common description across all Member States and answer a specific social need. Its objective is to contribute to the well-being or safety of citizens, or particular groups of citizens, and to help citizens who find themselves in particular difficult situations. The benefit of these services is that European citizens, including travellers and disabled persons, will now be able to reach these social value services by using the same recognisable telephone number in any EU Member State. This would however depend on the implementation of the particular service by the Member States.

A Cabinet Decision taken in September 2007 established an inter-ministerial process to guide the implementation of this project. A coordinating ministry would oversee the implementation of the whole process whilst different lead ministries, as determined by the nature of the service, would be responsible for assigning particular 116XXX services to a service provider. MITC was established as the coordinating ministry and has since forwarded recommendations to the lead ministries as follows:

Numbers Announced

Service	Lead Min.	Status
116 000 – Missing children helpline	MJHA	To be absorbed by the new 112 system
116 111 – Child helpline	MSOC	MSOC to determine a Ministerial owner
116 123 – Emotional Support	MSOC	To be taken up by Appogg – Contract stage
116 117 – Medical on call	MSOC	MSOC to determine a Ministerial owner
116 006 – Helpline for Victims of crime	MJHA	Lead Ministry to take up – in progress

IMU PROJECTS

Infrastructural Projects

The MITC personnel now enjoy the use of VoIP technology within most of its offices. These include the Permanent Secretary's office at Archbishop Street, Transcontinental offices at Zachary Street, the Television Licensing Unit at Pieta and the Passport and Public Registry Units at Evans building. The Secretariat at Strait Street and Land Registry at West street will follow in 2010.

The introduction of WiFi services has been introduced to the boardrooms within all MITC locations. This will enable visitors to establish a Government connection.

Since the Transcontinental building is hosting four major MITC directorates, it has gone through a major infrastructure overhaul and has now been centralised into one homogeneous system. This achieved a considerable amount of savings, both for telephony and infrastructural costs.

ARMS Project

The IMU is leading the WEB interface to the Enemalta/water services billing system. A presentation was given to the Minister who gave more positive feedback. This project is planned to kick-off in February 2010.

EU Regulatory Database

After the award of the tender issued by DCS on behalf of Secretariat EU Policy Manager, the IMU started to develop a database and search mechanism to support the collation of data. The use of open-source application is being investigated

Green Initiatives

The IMU has gone through an exercise with the aim of converting its office facilities to a friendlier environment. After taking stock of all the printers, faxes, scanners and photo copiers, the IMU started to swap around its equipment and upgrade when necessary, thus making better use of shared resources. The elimination of certain equipment has resulted in reducing the peripherals by 30%. New equipment was bought on the criteria that it is more economical, central and uses less energy.

Document Sharing

The use of MS SharePoint was introduced within the secretariat. This have given all Managers and Heads a better tool for document sharing. The IMU is also investigating the use of Plone - an open source solution so as to create an intranet with the aim to further reorganise its data management.

PARTICIPATION IN BOARDS & COMMITTEES

Meeting/Boards/Work-groups Details	Role
NIDMS Project Review Board	Chairing
Meeting MCA chairman re Political Projects Delivery (PDDs) status	Direction
MITA PDDs alignment and progress meeting	Direction
MT ICT Strategy	Member
Digital Switchover Steering Committee	Member
CIO Forum - Chairing	Chairing
CIO Council – Req by CEO MITA)	Member
Puttinu Cares Initiative (Req by Chair MITA)	Member
Dar tal-Providenza Initiative (Req by chair MITA)	Member
MITC Executive Management Committee	Member
MITC Permanent Secretary Management Committee	Member

JOE MAMO

Chief information Officer

Programme Implementation Directorate

OVERVIEW

The Directorate supports MITC organisations in project management from the inception stage of the funding application, through the implementation and subsequent closure of the project. The Directorate provides assistance at the initial project-funding application stage so as to ensure that desired project deliverables are consistent with EU guidelines and objectives. This assistance is aimed towards tapping the optimal funding sources for identified projects.

Data Protection, Freedom of Information, Green Initiatives, Pandemic Flu Response, Customer Care and Transposition of EU Legislation are the other main corporate focus areas for the Directorate. Inputs were also made in the National Strategic Reference Framework document update.

Additionally, the Directorate actively participated in a number of meetings abroad:

- EuroMed Sixth National Counterpart Teams Meeting, Brussels (24-25 June)
- 4th EuroMed Transport Working Group on Infrastructure and Regulatory Issues, Brussels (13-14 October)
- Marco Polo II Programme Committee Meetings (2 June; 4 December)
- Ten-T Committee Meetings (23 April; 27 November)
- Ten-T Financial Assistance Committee Meetings (18 February; 15 July; 7 December)
- Med Programme Brainstorming Meeting for MED strategic projects, Naples (16-17 November)

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

During the year under review, entities were actively supported and a number of issues arising from management and audit checks were effectively resolved. The Directorate organised and facilitated a number of meetings between project leaders and regulatory bodies so as to ensure smoother transitions between projections and project implementation.

A Ministerial Project Steering Committee (MPSE), chaired by the Permanent Secretary, was constituted in April 2009. The Committee monitors the progress of projects approved for EU co-funding under the Cohesion Policy and Operational Programmes for 2007-2013. During the year under review, the MPSC held four meetings.

In 2009 the Directorate was instrumental in guiding forward the following projects/or project proposals:

Maritime Sector Projects

- Refurbishment of the Marsaxlokk and Valletta Breakwaters
- Cirkewwa Ferry Terminal
- Refurbishment and Upgrading of Deep Water Quay
- Setting up of Oil Spill Response Capability for the protection of our seas
- East-Med Motorways of the Sea Masterplan
- West-Med Motorways of the Sea Masterplan

Land Transport Projects

- Upgrading of arterial and distributor roads including Marsascalea Bypass and Żabbar Road
- Upgrading of sections of the Trans European Network - Transport (TEN-T) Phase I, including Mġarr Road, MAVassalli Road, Marfa Road, Sea Passenger Link Road, Council of Europe Road, Mellieħa Bypass
- Upgrading of sections of the Trans European Network - Transport (TEN-T) Phase II, including the Coast Road and Kappara junction

Urban Regeneration

- Stronger Cottonera Communities
- Vertical Connection: better accessibility through innovative and cleaner transport

Information Technology

- The Second Step
- Maltese Text to Speech Synthesis
- Epitome: Empowerment Programme for IT use: Outreach for Micro-Entrepreneurship

Utilities

- Reduction of Emissions from the Dellimara Power Station
- Energy Sustainability Project at the new Enemalta premises in Xewkija
- Malta South Sewage Treatment Infrastructure

This directorate also assisted Enemalta Corporation with the following two project proposals falling under the European Economic Recovery Plan:

- Extension of the HV distribution network to the submarine cable terminal station
- Supply of submarine cable-Electricity interconnection Malta-Italy

DATA PROTECTION

This Directorate oversees that the provisions of the Data Protection Act are adhered to. The Act requires the legal, fair, and correct processing of relevant personal data, which ought to be as up-to-date as possible for the purpose at hand. During the current year a full and comprehensive Data Protection Audit of all the Permanent Secretariat's activities was conducted.

A Data Protection Policy for MITC was formulated whilst the SDO provided related training to 26 staff members.

PANDEMIC FLU

The Directorate coordinates the pandemic influenza initiatives of the Ministry. The sudden and rapid developments that occurred during the year have lent urgency to the need that business continuity must be maintained in case of emergency. Business Continuity Plans were drawn up and fine-tuned as necessary.

Regular participation at NPPC meetings was maintained, and relevant information was disseminated throughout the Ministry's portfolio.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT

Another task entrusted to the Directorate is overseeing the implementation of the provisions of the Act. The Directorate is assisting in the establishment of an FOI contact points network within the Ministry's portfolio, so as to facilitate efficient treatment of requests for information.

GREEN INITIATIVES

The Directorate maintained active participation in environmental initiatives mainly through its Green Leader. This year the committee of green leaders focused attention on four main sectors:

- Commencement of energy audits in various government buildings.
- The provision of an electric car for each Ministry.
- Training of staff with emphasis on waste separation.
- The formulation of a policy for a Greener Public Service/Sector.

The aim of these initiatives is to strengthen sustainable development whilst fostering positive changes in employees' behaviour towards the environment.

CUSTOMER CARE

The scope of the Customer Care Unit within the Directorate is to facilitate the timely resolution of complaints received through the Customer Care System and other channels. During the year under review, the unit treated a number of complaints in coordination with a network of contact points within the Ministry's portfolio. All complaints were resolved amicably and efficiently.

TRANSPPOSITION OF EU LEGISLATION

The Directorate oversees the transposition of EU Directives into Maltese legislation. During 2009, the main efforts in this field were made in connection with the implementation of the Services Directive.

ANGELO MALLIA

Director (Programme Implementation)

EU Affairs Directorate

OVERVIEW

The EU Affairs Directorate (EUAD) is responsible for managing MITC's participation in EU structures and processes, as well as for ensuring effective coordination of all EU-related issues between the Ministry's departments, entities and authorities as well as with other EU stakeholders, including other ministries, the Permanent Representation of Malta to the EU and the EU Secretariat within the Office of the Prime Minister.

The Directorate also gives regular information to the MITC's entities and policy managers about important documents received from the EU institutions and, in addition, coordinates and participates in the preparation of positions and standpoints within the competence of the Ministry with regard to the active and complete participation of the Ministry officials in the EU policy-making process and decision-making by the European institutions.

The Director (EU Affairs) also represents MITC in various EU-related committees both locally and abroad.

PARTICIPATION IN WORKING GROUPS

EUAD continued to ensure adequate participation in all areas within its competence, and coordinated the preparation of instruction notes and the follow-up reporting related to the 240 meetings of Council working groups and the 192 meetings of Commission expert groups, held in 2009. The Directorate provided assistance to the entities with their participation in the relevant expert groups and committees, by acting as coordinator both between EU Secretariat and entities and also by ensuring consultations with other ministries. The year saw an increase of 51 proposals in the field of transport and communications. The Directorate also prepared instruction notes for the meetings of the Committee of Permanent Representatives and briefing notes for the Minister ahead of meetings of the four TTE Councils on Transport and Communications and six Ministerial meetings including Informal Councils. Other briefs were prepared for meetings such as High-level conference on Future road transport - safe and clean - Gothenburg, Sweden; Safer Internet Conference held in Prague in April; and the Visby 2010 Conference including 2010 High Level group meeting. Briefing notes and talking points were also prepared for particular bilateral meetings held by the Prime Minister and the Permanent Representative as requested.

The Directorate was actively involved in the drawing up of a number of explanatory memoranda on EU proposals and communications. During 2009, a total of 68 explanatory memoranda were drawn up by EUAD and presented to the Inter-Ministerial Committee, the Cabinet and the Foreign and European Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives.

CONSULTATIONS AND EU DECISION-MAKING

The Directorate continued in its role as the ministry's focal point between other ministries on a myriad of technical matters forming the subject of EU proposals. The Directorate gave its contribution to various memoranda presented to the Inter-Ministerial Committee on EU Affairs and also Instruction Notes for use by the Technical Attachés. During the year, the Directorate followed closely and prepared instructions for

meetings at Council level, from the initial stages of discussions at working party level to COREPER and Council. Some of the proposals dealt with included:

- Proposal for a Directive on Aviation Security Charges;
- Passenger Rights (Land Transport);
- Communication on mobilising Information and Communication Technologies to facilitate the transition to an energy-efficient, low-carbon economy;
- Proposal on the deployment of Intelligent Transport Systems in the field of road transport and for interfaces with other transport modes.

The Directorate further undertook extensive consultations as required, including presentations to the MEUSAC Sectoral Committee for Transport Telecommunications and Energy. A number of other briefs and correspondence on topics such as the maritime sector, rights of passengers, Eurovignette, Public Transport, Single European Sky, Aviation Industry, Groundhandling, Ozone depleting substances and driving times were also handled. In liaison with other EU Affairs Directorates, the EUAD gave its contribution on various areas such as climate change and energy policy, after carrying out extensive consultations within the Ministry.

The Directorate is the Euromed contact point for the Ministry. In November the Directorate participated in the Euromed Forum held in Barcelona, which dealt with the projects of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM). The Directorate participated in the three GTMO (group of Transport Ministers of the Mediterranean) meetings held in April, May and November, and in the preparatory meetings of the 2010 High Level Group held in June and September. The preparatory meetings of the 2010 HLG covered a number of topics including Future Internet and the Digital Single Market and this led to the presentation of a report produced by the 2010 e-Inclusion Subgroup as a result of its meeting in Limassol, Cyprus, on 6-8 April 2009, and later to a public consultation document in August 2009.

HARMONISATION WITH THE EU ACQUIS

During 2009, the Directorate continued to monitor the implementation of the *acquis* by the entities within its remit. The Ministry was also involved in various aspects of environmental *acquis*, which involved its various entities in implementation measures and reporting to the local regulator.

The Directorate liaised with its counterparts on these various issues, also attending ad hoc Commission Package meetings. The Directorate gave its contribution in the drafting of replies to Commission infringement correspondence, correspondence relating to state aid notification, questionnaires and reports related to areas within the Ministry's remit.

PROJECTS FINANCED BY EU FUNDS (2004 - 2006)

The EUAD is responsible for the projects financed by the 2004-2006 structural funds. Therefore, throughout 2009, the Directorate continued to provide assistance, and to monitor and ensure the proper implementation of the various projects financed by the 2004-2006 structural funds.

The year saw the end of the programme period and with it the end of EU financing of various large infrastructure projects. A total of €4.89 million in European Regional Development Funds were used to continue the sewage transmission project. Further funds were used to cover costs incurred in the upgrading of the Reverse Osmosis Plants; an additional sum of €1.5 million of ERDF funds was allocated. Following a saving of €500,000, available for disbursement under the Cohesion Fund, the reconstruction of an additional 350m of the Mġarr Road Ghajnsielem became possible. A tender of works was awarded in November 2009 and the selected bidder is expected to commence works in early 2010. The Transitional Facility Programme of 2006 provided €137,500 and enabled the Malta Transport Authority to participate in a Capacity Building project, the scope of which was to assist the Authority to be in a position to issue Certificates of Professional Competencies (CPC's) to all those motoring schools that are offering courses

to operators of heavy duty vehicles. The project was concluded successfully by the end of 2009. Work also continued on the formulation of a storm water master plan, which has as its aim the assessment of the current situation, impacts associated with storm water, as well as a study on the possibilities to harvest, store and reuse, treat and distribute storm water. This project also covers the EIA for the major/priority area/s projects identified in the plan. The project is expected to be completed by the end of 2010.

PROGRAMME FUNDS

The Directorate, in collaboration with the Civil Aviation Division and the Corporate Services Directorate, is actively participating in the Blue Med Project which is funded by TEN-T funds and which has as its aim the definition of and eventual implementation of a Functional Airspace block in the Mediterranean. The first meeting of the Governing Body and the Project Management Board were held in Malta in July, and a succession of meetings of the various work packages have since taken place. The Directorate also chairs the steering committee that monitors developments concerning this project.

STAFF TRAINING

During 2009, EUAD staff attended SDO courses in basic ICT skills, managing skills, Europe on the internet and Data Protection.

LUCIENNE MEILAK
Director (EU Affairs)

Policy Development Directorate

OVERVIEW

The Policy Development Directorate was set up late in November 2008 to facilitate the effective development of policy options related to the Ministry for Infrastructure, Transport and Communications' portfolio of responsibilities; to coordinate the preparation and formulation of Malta's position on the National Reform Programme and Better Regulation projects by the different entities falling under the remit of the Ministry and to oversee their effective implementation; and to contribute to the formulation of the Ministry's position on issues related to Malta's international and economic relations, particularly with third countries.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

During the year under review, through background research, synthesis of information and consultation with MITC stakeholders, the Directorate provided support and advice to the Permanent Secretary and Director General on a variety of policy issues. By keeping abreast with developments taking place in the areas of infrastructural development, transport and communications, the Directorate contributed to the development of long-term strategic plans in support of approved domestic policies, and actively collaborated with the Ministry's core strategists in the updating of policies pertaining to the Ministry's portfolio of responsibilities.

NATIONAL REFORM PROGRAMME

The Policy Development Directorate is the Ministry's National Reform Programme designated Coordinator. The MITC is responsible for the implementation of eight projects corresponding to the equivalent number of measures under the EU Growth and Jobs Strategy that are listed in the NRP 2008 - 2010, namely:

- Developing a robust ICT environment and Next Generation Infrastructure
- Investing in a connected society
- Developing a smart workforce with the necessary ICT skills
- Enhancing the quality of life of citizens through ICT
- Re-inventing government transformation and open government
- Taking care of e-business through the development of a series of e-projects
- Developing Malta as a world leader in ICT
- Public Land Transport Reform

Throughout 2009, the Directorate closely monitored progress achieved on these measures through constant liaison with the relevant entities; it actively pursued their timely implementation, set up *ad hoc* meetings and briefing sessions with stakeholders, and then submitted regular and comprehensive reports and updates to the NRP Unit, MFEI. The Policy Development Directorate moreover participated in all discussions held with EU Commission officials in the course of their periodic NRP fact-finding mission visits to Malta.

BETTER REGULATION

Early in 2009, the Director (Policy Development) was appointed Better Regulation Ministry Coordinator (BRMC), assuming responsibility for the coordination of the implementation of MITC's measures within the Action Plan for Simplification. Better Regulation had by now become a key priority for the public administration, with a clearly defined purpose, namely that of simplifying government processes and reducing unnecessary burdens on the business sector and on citizens alike.

During the year, the Policy Development Directorate actively monitored and closely followed the progress of various Ministry-specific measures of Better Regulation, particularly those simplification projects that had been undertaken by the Public Registry Department, the Network Infrastructure Directorate and the Malta Transport Authority. The Directorate also played an instrumental role in the identification of new projects whose implementation would facilitate the lives of citizens and businessmen, such as e-ID and GPG services and a consolidated contact centre for WSC and Enemalta Corporation clients.

Throughout 2009, the Directorate provided full cooperation to the Better Regulation Unit of the Management Efficiency Unit through the constant provision of data on a steady flow of surveys, questionnaires and exercises concerning burden reduction initiatives taken by the Ministry. Such requests for information originated mainly from the Parliamentary Secretary for Public Dialogue and Information in the Office of the Prime Minister and the Ministry of Finance, but also from the European Union, and for this purpose the Directorate liaised closely with MITC entities and departments, holding a number of meetings and briefing sessions in close collaboration with the BRU.

In view of Government's EU commitment to reduce administrative burdens resulting from information obligations on businesses by 15% by 2012, and Cabinet's Action Plan *Better Regulation Roadmap 2008 - 2010*, the Directorate set off to gather fresh proposals from all MITC entities for the simplification of existing processes. These initiatives include the introduction of smart electricity meters and harmonised small ship registration services, but two noteworthy measures being implemented within MITC are the EU award-winning new vehicle registration system and the general authorisations regime in the communications sector. Both measures are significantly contributing towards the achievement of Government's goal of a 15% overall reduction of information obligations imposed on the business sector.

Director (Policy Development) is an active member of the BRMC Network which was set up in June 2009 and convenes regularly with the BRU under the chairmanship of Chief Executive Officer MEU, with the aim to better implement Malta's BR Strategy. In the last quarter of 2009, The Directorate oversaw the appointment of Better Regulation Contact Persons (BRCPs) within all MITC entities and departments.

RELATIONS WITH THIRD COUNTRIES

The Policy Development Directorate works closely with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Investment and also with the Economic Policy Division to ensure that MITC's input on partnership and cooperation agreements, international and economic relations, and a variety of bilateral agreements with third countries is delivered efficiently and effectively at all times.

During 2009, the Directorate provided all necessary assistance in the formulation of the Ministry's position on a substantial number of issues, including air services agreements, merchant shipping agreements and various memoranda of understanding, then participated in relevant meetings with MFA and MFEI officials with the assistance of stakeholders from MITC entities.

The Directorate moreover represented the Ministry in high level groups attended by foreign ministers and delegations, particularly when such agreements were officially ratified. Significant events of this nature occurring in 2009 include the Maltese-Tunisian Mixed Commission meetings (March) and the Sino-Maltese Economic and Trade Mixed Commission meeting (June). In December 2009, the Policy Development Directorate coordinated the Ministry's position on the proposals set for discussion in the

forthcoming Maltese-Libyan Joint Commission meetings due in January 2010, and also participated in the relevant preparatory briefing sessions at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

During the period under review, the Directorate carried out other important responsibilities, as follows:

- Director (Policy Development) was appointed Member on the European Railway Agency (ERA) Administrative Board, and in November 2009 represented the Ministry in the 18th Administrative Board Meeting held at ERA Headquarters in Lille, France.
- Assistant Director (Policy Development) sits on the Climate Change Committee as the Ministry's representative, and attended regular meetings held at the Ministry for Resources and Rural Affairs.
- Assistant Director (Policy Development) also represented the Ministry in meetings held by the Ministry for Social Policy in connection with the *Proposal for a Council Directive to implement equal treatment between persons irrespective of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation*, and regularly coordinated MITC's input on the topic from the relevant stakeholders.
- The Directorate handled requests for feedback on a large number of notifications forwarded on an ongoing basis by the Malta Standards Authority in relation to the consultation process required in terms of the provisions of Directive 98/34/EC for the provision of information in the field of technical standards and regulations and of rules on Information Society Services.

JOSEPH TONG

Director (Policy Development)

Civil Aviation Division

REGULATORY WORK

The objectives of the Civil Aviation Division (DCA) as a regulator are to ensure that all aviation activities are carried out safely and in conformity with international standards which Malta has to apply as a result of its membership in the EU, ICAO (International Civil Aviation Organisation), ECAC (European Civil Aviation Conference), EUROCONTROL and JAA (Joint Aviation Authorities). It achieves these objectives by the following tasks: regulation of air transport services; airworthiness certification and oversight; certification of aircraft operators; licensing of aeronautical personnel; determination of international air navigation obligations; oversight of MIA plc as aerodrome services provider and of Malta Air Traffic Services Ltd. as provider of air navigation services in the Malta Flight Information Region.

As far as regulatory work is concerned, the DCA issues Air Service Licences and Air Operator's Certificates to commercial air transport operators as well as licences to aircraft engineers and aircraft crew. These commercial aircraft operators include amongst others Air Malta which is the national airline, Medavia which is a company that operates charter flights mainly in Libya, Eurojet and Comlux. In addition safety oversight is required with regard to aerial work and as well as flight training activities carried out by three Private Pilot Licence registered facilities.

The Department is also responsible for the approval of aircraft maintenance organisations after regular inspections have been carried out on their management, procedures, equipment and staff. These organisations include the Air Malta aircraft maintenance organisation, Medavia Ltd., Aeromaritime, Lufthansa Technik (Malta) and Falcon Engineering. All these organisations have been granted EASA Part 145 approvals.

The Department also oversees aerodrome services and air navigation services to ensure that they are provided in accordance with international standards.

Legislation

During 2009 a number of legal notices were issued to amend existing legislation or publish new ones. These included legal notices amending the Air Navigation Order 1990.

Staff

In order to be able to manage effectively its regulatory mandate, the Department's regulatory division has a staff complement of 10 full-time specialists and 11 employed on contract on a part-time basis. During 2009, various calls for applications were issued to replace the grade of Assistant Directors by Headship positions and the grade of Operations Officer by specialists. For this purpose, calls for applications were issued for the positions of Head of Personnel Licensing, Head of Air Navigation Services Unit and Head of Aerodrome Licensing and Aircraft Registry Unit; specialist in the Technical Units. In order to strengthen its regulatory mandate, in July, a call for applications was issued for the position of Inspector in the Flight Operations Inspectorate.

Action was taken to provide appropriate training both in Malta and abroad for the Division's professional officers so that the latter could carry out their duties more efficiently and also to keep abreast of developments in their specialised areas.

The Civil Aviation Division also operates a 24 hour office at the Air Terminal of the Malta International Airport in which five Duty Management Officers work on a shift basis.

During 2009, the DCA retained responsibility for staff career progression of those of its former employees now working with Malta Air Traffic Services Ltd who still enjoy government employee status.

Personnel Licensing

During 2009 the Personnel Licensing Section managed the following number of licences and certificates issued by the Department:

- 159 JAR-FCL Airline Transport Pilot Licences (ATPL)
- 53 JAR-FCL Commercial Pilot Licences (CPL)
- 104 JAR-FCL Private Pilot Licences (PPL)
- 56 Air Traffic Controller Licences
- 57 Apron Controller Licences
- 30 Certificates of validation of foreign pilot licences including microlight pilot licences

The Personnel Licensing Section conducts the Airline Transport Pilot Licence theoretical examinations and is responsible for the issue of licences and certificates of validation to private and professional pilots in accordance with the standards of the Joint Aviation Authorities. It is responsible jointly with the Flight Operations Inspectorate section for the approval of training courses, Flight Training Organisations and Type Training Organisations for flight crew.

The Personnel Licensing Section is responsible for the issue of air traffic controller licences in accordance with the standards of Eurocontrol and the EU Directive and for the issue of apron controller licences. It is also jointly responsible with the Air Navigation Services Section to approve the training and competency scheme of the local Training Provider and Air Navigation Service Provider.

Flight Operations Inspectorate

During 2009, an initial Air Operator Certificate was granted to Carre Aviation, Orion (Malta) Ltd and Efly whilst two Air Operator Certificates in respect of European 2000 and Europe Executive Jet Services were cancelled bringing the total to eight operators certified for commercial air transport operations. Operational surveillance of these eight air operators involved the following inspections and associated follow-up action:

- Ground and flight inspections at overseas bases;
- Annual review for all operators and annual meeting with the Accountable Managers of all operators;
- Air Operator Certificate renewal process for all operators and Air Operator Certificate variations as necessary and associated tasks.

Other tasks included the management of the process for the approval of Minimum Equipment List (MEL) revisions and the management of the process for the issuance of approvals to operators allowing use of specific flight simulators. The Inspectorate participated in the inspection for renewal of Air Malta Type Rating Training Organisation (TRTO) approval and initial TRTO approval for Medavia, in the Safety Assessment of Foreign Aircraft (SAFA) programme and acted as the SAFA National Coordinator, in the European Commission Air Safety Committee dealing with EU-OPS and the Community list of carriers subject to an operating ban in Europe and, finally, it participated as team member in the EASA Operations Standardisation Team audit of the Belgian Authority. Type rating examiner assessments of Air Malta and Medavia pilots were carried out on behalf of the Personnel Licensing section.

A number of Operating Standards Circulars was published by the Inspectorate throughout the period under review containing information and guidance to Air Operators.

AIRWORTHINESS INSPECTORATE

The Airworthiness Inspectorate is responsible for:

- The issue of Certificate of Airworthiness and Permit to Fly for Maltese registered aircraft;
- The continuing airworthiness oversight of Maltese registered aircraft;
- The approval of Continuing Airworthiness Management Organisations (CAMO) in accordance with Part-M Subpart G;
- The approval of Part-145 aircraft maintenance organisations;
- The approval of Part-147 aircraft maintenance training organisations;
- The continuous safety oversight of Part-M CAMO's, Part-145 AMO's, Part-147 AMTO's;
- The issue and variation of Part-66 aircraft maintenance licences;
- Accomplishment of SAFA inspections on foreign registered aircraft in conjunction with the Flight Operations Inspectorate;
- Follow-up and investigation of Mandatory Occurrence Reporting related to airworthiness and maintenance;
- Standardisation and liaison with EASA (European Aviation Safety Agency) on airworthiness standards;
- Minor certification tasks on behalf of EASA;
- International Civil Aircraft Register.
- During 2009, the Airworthiness Inspectorate issued the following approvals, licences, statements and permit to fly:
 - 4 continuing Airworthiness Management Organisations approvals in respect of Efly, Carre Aviation, Orion (Malta) Ltd and HAM;
 - 2 Part-145 aircraft maintenance organisations approvals;
 - 21 new Part-66 aircraft maintenance licences;
 - 10 variations to Part-66 aircraft maintenance licences;
 - 2 export conformity statements;
 - 5 EASA permit to fly;
 - 1 national permit to fly for microlight aircraft.

In conjunction with MCAST, the Airworthiness Inspectorate carried out eight B1 Part-66 module examinations. 186 prospective aircraft maintenance mechanics sat for these examinations.

The Airworthiness Inspectorate carried out 27 aircraft inspections, 29 audits at the approved organisations and 6 SAFA inspections in collaboration with the Flight Operations Inspectorate. The aircraft inspections included 14 inspections for issue of certificate of airworthiness, 21 airworthiness reviews, two export certificate of airworthiness and two ramp inspections.

The Airworthiness Inspectorate participated in EASA standardisation inspection of Portugal and carried out numerous desktop audits of maintenance programmes, CAME and MOEs.

AIR NAVIGATION SERVICES

One of the most demanding tasks was to set up a database of all ATM occurrences that were reported either by Malta Air Traffic Services Ltd, by Malta International Airport plc or through other sources. By means of this database, a statistical analysis was performed in an attempt to obtain information on trends in aviation safety and to obtain information on the most common causes of incidents.

Various meetings of EUROCONTROL and the European Commission were attended in order to keep abreast with the latest developments in various fields and, in the case of the latter, to participate in the meetings of the Single European Sky Committee and the Blue Med Functional Airspace Block Project.

An extensive first amendment of the fourth edition of the Malta Aeronautical Information Publication was also issued as a result of changes necessary in the air route structure of the Malta Flight Information Region.

Other important activities included the annual update of the Local Convergence and Implementation Plan and the ongoing process of approval of various documents and procedures used by air traffic control personnel.

The section also participated in various meetings with ICAO, local operators and service providers and actively coordinated various other activities.

AERODROME LICENSING

The Aerodrome Licensing Section carried out a number of audits/inspections at Malta International Airport to ensure that the aerodrome was properly equipped, maintained and operated in accordance with international standards. Regular meetings were held between the Section and aerodrome operator staff to address various licensing issues that arise from local legislation and international standards. As a result of the audits/inspections carried out, the Section recommended the continuation of Malta International Airport's aerodrome licence and the issue of a revised Aerodrome Licence to Gozo Heliport Ltd.

The Section also routinely examined a number of building project applications which were made to MEPA to declare whether there are any objections from a civil aviation point of view.

Registration of Aircraft

During 2009, eighteen new aircraft were added to the Malta Register of Aircraft, consisting of two Airbus 318, an Airbus 319, one Learjet 60, four Bombardier Challenger 600, one Bombardier Global Express, one Bombardier Global 5000, one British Aerospace BAe 125-800B, one British Aerospace BAe 146-300, one DeHavilland DHC 6-300, one Cessna 152, one Diamond DA 20-C1, one Diamond DA 40D, one Vulcanair and one microlight aircraft.. On the other hand, six aircraft were deleted from the Register, namely two Bombardier Challenger 600, one Learjet 60, one Fairchild Metro 23, one DeHavilland DHC 6-300 and one Vulcanair.

At the end of 2009, there were 80 aircraft (including 25 microlight aircraft) on the Malta Register of Aircraft. Aircraft of the Armed Forces of Malta are not included in the Malta Register of Aircraft.

Air Transport & Air Services

International scheduled services were operated between Malta International Airport and London (Gatwick/Heathrow/Luton), Frankfurt, Rome, Manchester, Munich, Catania, Paris (Orly/Charles De Gaulle), Brussels, Amsterdam, Larnaca, Zurich, Tripoli, Milan, Vienna, Dublin, Dubai, Dusseldorf, Pisa/Florence, Venice, Gerona, Madrid, Birmingham, Bari, Stockholm, Trapani, Berlin, Edinburgh, Hamburg, Stockholm, Moscow (Domodedovo/Shermetyevo), Newcastle, Bristol, Leipzig/Halle, Barcelona, Lyon, Stuttgart, Athens, Reggio Calabria, Marseille, Istanbul, Tunis, Bologna, Budapest, Sofia, Helsinki, Prague, Toulouse, Cairo, Verona, Glasgow, Palermo, Geneva, Valencia, Warsaw, Nuremberg, Belgrade, Luxembourg, Kiev and Monastir.

The scheduled carriers operating at Malta were Air Malta plc, Ryanair Limited, Easyjet Airlines Company Limited, Deutsche Lufthansa AG, Emirates, Alitalia CAI, British Airways plc, Vueling Airlines, SA, Scandinavian Airlines System (SAS), Austrian Airlines, Osterreichische Luftverkehrs AG, Jamahiriya Libyan Arab Airlines, Finnair Oyj, Sevenair (Tuninter, SA), Egyptair, Catair Lineas Aereas - Clickair SA, LOT - Polish Airlines, Air Berlin GmbH & Co Luftverkehrs KG, Jugoslovenski Aerotransport - JAT Airways, Luxair – Soci t  Luxembourgioise de Navigation Aerienn, SA, e-Fly,

Air Nostrum Lineas Aereas del Mediterraneo, SA, Aerosvit Airlines, Wind Jet SpA, Jetairfly (TUI Airlines Belgium), Ethiopian Airlines Enterprise and Spanair.

Charter flights were operated mainly from the United Kingdom, Denmark, France, Spain & Canary Islands, Italy, Netherlands and Greece.

Passenger Movements

The number of passengers who travelled on scheduled flights during 2008 was 2,648,178, whilst the corresponding number of passengers for 2009 was 2,605,177. With regard to non-scheduled flights, the number of passengers who travelled on non-scheduled flights during 2008 was 461,690 whilst the corresponding number of passengers for 2009 was 313,487.

Computerisation

During 2009, the Division continued with its plans to procure new computers and laptops to replace obsolete equipment and to standardise the computer software in use. In addition access to Internet was expanded to cover all officers dealing with technical matters and to some administration staff. Full computerisation of the Department was achieved.

The DCA website www.dca.gov.mt has now been in use since July 2003 and has proved extremely useful.

International Relations

As long as it has been functioning, the Department has maintained continuous contact with international organisations of which Malta is a member and took active part in international meetings, in particular those organised by ECAC and ICAO, and during the last years also by EUROCONTROL and JAA and since May 2004, by the EU or its institutions such as EASA. As a result of these memberships, the DCA keeps abreast of technological developments in the field of air transport.

During 2009, Department personnel participated in various EU related meetings, JAA Committees and in EUROCONTROL and ECAC meetings.

The Department also held bilateral discussions with delegation from Qatar on air services.

Transition to Authority

Following the enactment of the Authority for Transport in Malta Act in June 2009, all the necessary administrative and financial preparations were taken in hand so as to facilitate the transition of the Civil Aviation Division from a government department to form part of the Authority for Transport in Malta as from 1 January 2010.

GEORGE BORG MARKS
Acting Director General (Civil Aviation)

Land and Public Registry Division

GENERAL

In view of the planned Central Registry Act, whose main aim is the establishment of one Central Registry through an amalgamation of the Land and Public Registries, it has become essential to ensure that the Division has the necessary administrative capacity to provide nation-wide databases both in terms of trained human resources as well as technological capacity.

An exercise which includes the vetting of a draft version of Central Registry Act for any inconsistencies, contradictions or irregularities; drafting of subsidiary legislation and of forms as stipulated in the draft Act itself; and identification of other pieces of Maltese legislation which will be affected by the entry into force of the Central Registry Act commenced in 2009 and is currently ongoing. A consultation process with the main stakeholders is also in progress. The Act is expected to be brought into force during 2010.

LAND REGISTRY

The number of applications lodged at the Land Registry during 2009 was 7,487.

LAND REGISTRY CERTIFICATION SYSTEM (LRCS)

During 2009, various remedial initiatives were undertaken to try to resolve some performance issues which arose in the beginning of the year, amongst which were the replacement of hardware, infrastructural changes and also some minor system changes. Remedial action was also undertaken by directing technical staff from MITA to look into the area taking into consideration the commitments that have been made to the growth of the Land Registry and the state of readiness its systems must be in, to accommodate the Central Registry Act.

A short-term project aimed at enhancing the LRCS commenced during the last quarter of 2009 and is expected to be finalised during 2010.

LAND REGISTRY QUALITY SERVICE

The Land Registry has a Quality Service Charter of the Land Registry which was one of the first to have been introduced by Government way back in 1999. Commitments featuring in the Quality Service Charter offer a service that aims at responding to customers' requests sometimes within a few minutes: clients coming to the Registry for a Land Registry Plan, for example, are guaranteed service within ten minutes of their request. A generic e-mail account for the Land Registry - land.registry@gov.mt - which enables clients to make comments or complaints electronically was created and queries are dealt with on a daily basis. Random checking on all types of applications lodged at the Registry revealed that targets and deadlines set out in the Charter are rigorously being observed.

DATA PROTECTION AND FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (FOI)

A Data Protection Policy was drawn up, vetted and approved by the Data Protection Unit, Office of the Prime Minister and published way back in 2006. Besides, the Land Registry collaborated extensively with

the OPM Data Protection Team for the finalisation of an analysis report of data collection forms and a full Data Protection Audit. Recommendations are regularly scrutinised and implemented whenever possible. One of the recommendations included the training off all staff on matters of data protection and in fact, most Land Registry staff has attended such courses until recently.

Management also attended courses organised by SDO on the Freedom of Information Act. Documents indicating exempt documents/information which are or might be held at the Division and Internal Complaints Procedure and related forms in relation to the implementation of the FOI Act have been drafted and communicated to the Information and Data Commissioner and the FOI Act Coordinating Unit. The proposed procedure will enable applicants to forward a complaint with the Division prior to submitting a complaint to the Information and Data Protection Commissioner. A generic email account for addressing requests under the FOIA: FOI.LandandPublicRegistry@gov.mt has also been created and the FOI Officer and alternate FOI Officer were nominated in November 2009.

PREŻENTATA AND SEARCHES SECTIONS

The *Preżentata* and Search Sections, which were transferred from the Public Registry to the Land Registry during 2002, in order to enhance the one stop shop concept in so far as property registration is concerned, have now become an integral part of the Land Registry. During 2009, the Division also commenced activities which will facilitate the taking over of the functions and operations presently carried out by a private contractor who currently carries out personal searches.

VOLUNTARY REGISTRATION SCHEME

In conjunction with the Rehabilitation Project Office and the local councils, a voluntary scheme of registration was launched in November 2001 for property situated within Valletta, Floriana, Senglea, Cospicua and Vittoriosa. By virtue of this scheme, owners of immovable property within these areas are entitled to benefit from certain subsidies. These include the preparation of the registration plan by government employees at the expense of €23.29 and subsequently the actual registration of property at the cost of €23.29 rather than €46.59.

The year 2009 in fact saw further coordinated phased implementation of the Scheme and work on the Scheme for the Voluntary Registration of Property in the areas mentioned is still in progress. In fact, out of 2,182 applications received, 1,217 were finalised and work on 965 applications is ongoing. The applications were divided as follows:

Council	Applications
Valletta	469
Birgu	326
Bormla	673
L-Isla	379
Furjana	335
Total	2,182

GREEN INITIATIVES

The Land Registry actively supports and promotes green initiatives. The Land Registry's contact person regularly liaises with the Ministry's Green Leader. Paper, Carton and Plastic are collected for recycling in collaboration with Wasteserv Ltd. Appropriate bins for this purpose were also procured. Spent batteries are collected for proper disposal. Staff is committed to save as much as possible on paper, envelopes, electricity and water and spent light bulbs are replaced with energy-saving ones. Touch-free auto-spouts for the department's water taps and infrared motion sensors for lighting have also been procured..

PUBLIC REGISTRY

The main functions and responsibilities of the Public Registry originate from the Public Registry Act, Cap 56, the Marriage Act, Cap 255, Chapter 16 of the Civil Code, Sections 1 to 306 and the Housing (Decontrol) Ordinance, 1959, Cap 158.

CIVIL STATUS

This Section deals with the registration and issuance of copies of Acts of Birth, Marriage and Death as well as all annotations to these Acts. Besides registering all births, marriages and deaths occurring in Malta, the Department registers, on request, certificates of births, marriages and deaths of Maltese citizens where the event occurred abroad. During 2009, a total of 551 such registrations were made which included 525 births, and 26 deaths. There were also 178 annotations of nullity of marriage and divorces. Statistical data is also regularly forwarded to government departments, particularly the National Statistics Authority.

REGISTRATIONS

The total number of Acts of Civil Status registered during 2009, as compared with 2008, is shown in the following table:

	Registrations		Extracts Issued	
	2008	2009	2008	2009
<i>Births</i>	4,566	4,384	46,178	43,946
<i>Marriages</i>	2,458	2,239	12,262	12,353
<i>Deaths</i>	3,161	2,978	15,419	14,422
Total	10,185	9,601	73,859	70,721

ISSUANCE OF CIVIL STATUS CERTIFICATES

During 2009 a total of 8,473 *Full Copies* of Acts of Civil Status were issued against 7,825 copies issued in 2008. During 2009, a total of 15,722 Civil Status certificates issued were ordered online.

The Department issues Free Status Certificates which attest that no registration of an act of marriage exists in the Civil Status Records against a particular individual. The number of these certificates issued in 2009 was 254 against 202 in 2008.

ANNOTATIONS

Any person, who may have an interest, can bring an action before a competent court in Malta for (a) the correction of any registered Civil Status Act, (b) the legitimation *per subsequens matrimonium* of a person born out of wedlock and (c) the acknowledgement of the paternity of a person born out of wedlock. Legitimation *per subsequens matrimonium* may also be effected by applying to the Director, Public Registry.

Moreover divorces and nullities of marriage obtained abroad in a competent court may be registered at the Public Registry after ascertaining that they conform to the relative requisites of Maltese Law. Nullities of marriage obtained in Malta are also registered at the Department. All changes emanating from the above instances are recorded in the Annotations column of the relative Civil Status Act.

Comparative figures for annotations entered in the registers of Civil Status during 2009 compared with those of 2008 are listed in the table below:

Types of Annotations	2008	2009
Corrections	131	134
Legitimations or Acknowledgements	211	250

Nullity of marriage	180	161
Foreign Divorces	29	35
Total	551	580

ADOPTIONS

The number of adoptions entered in the Adopted Persons Register in terms of the Civil Code (Amendment) Ordinance 1962 during 2009 was 44 against 71 in the previous year.

MARRIAGE REGISTRY

The number of marriages in respect of which formalities were completed by the Marriage Registry during the year under review, as compared to the preceding year, was as follows:

Marriages in Malta	2008	2009
Religious	1,474	1,343
Other Religious	4	8
Civil	743	731
Total	2,221	2,082

The number of marriages (Religious and Civil) between foreign couples who in 2009 opted to contract their marriage in Malta was 539. These couples hailed from a wide diversity of countries. During 2009, 106 Maltese men and 126 Maltese women were married to foreigners.

The number of religious marriages between Maltese couples was 1,191, while 119 opted for a Civil marriage. Civil marriages may be celebrated at the Department and also outside the Public Registry premises. The Department was allowed use of St James Cavalier in Valletta for the celebration of civil marriages during the period of time necessary for Merchant Street to be renovated.

LAND VALUATION SECTION

The Department processes applications for the decontrol of privately-owned dwelling houses in terms of the Housing (Decontrol) Ordinance 1959 and had issued 2 certificates of decontrol during 2009.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Various officers were detailed to attend courses organised by the Staff Development Organisation.

As in previous years, the Head of the Department attended a number of meetings with other ministries and entities, including the Office of the Ombudsman, and Emigrants Commission, National Commission for Disabled Persons,, National Commission for the Promotion of Equality and Malta Information Technology Agency.

Work was undertaken to convert a number of rooms at the Camerata Building into stores which will be used instead of the current stores in San Gwann.

PASSPORT AND CIVIL REGISTRATION DEPARTMENT

The main function of the Department of Passport and Civil Registration is the issuance of Maltese passports to Maltese citizens. The Passport Office also provides assistance to Maltese embassies, high commissions, consuls, and the Passport Office in Gozo. Other functions of the Civil Registration Department include: acting as the Registration Authority for the e-ID, maintaining, enhancing and developing Government's corporate database known as the Common Database (CdB) and notifying the Public Registry of births and deaths that occur in Malta.

BIOMETRIC PASSPORTS

The first Maltese biometric passport was issued in September 2008 which brought Malta in line with EU legislation, and also enabled it to become part of the US Visa Waiver Programme. The current biometric feature is the facial image, and is captured at the Passport Office via a specialised system which is compliant to ICAO standards.

AMENDMENT TO PASSPORT REGULATIONS

During 2009, the passport office introduced a new Passport for Aliens. In view of this, Legal Notice 97 of 2009 was issued which amended the Passport Regulations of 1993 and added new regulations to the principal regulations with regards to travel documents for alien persons, etc. The fees for the issue of an Alien Travel Document or Alien's Passport were established by Legal Notice 96 of 2009.

ANCILLARY SERVICES

- The Passport Office accepts applications for the issuance of a second passport in special circumstances and when considered necessary. During the year, 151 such passports were authorised and issued.
- Convention Travel Documents are also issued by the Passport Office. A total of 167 Travel Documents were issued during 2009. Aliens Passports are also being issued and 1,164 such passports were issued during 2009 to persons holding subsidiary protection.
- To further enhance the one-stop-shop concept, Passport Office officials are also appointed as Commissioners for Oaths to administer oaths when necessary. A total of 657 oaths were taken in 2009.
- The Department also offers an all inclusive round-the-clock emergency service to clients needing an urgent passport during silent hours: 39 such cases were processed in 2009.
- During 2009, a total of 1,069 urgent passports (issuance within four hours of application) were issued.
- The Passport Office also offers the services of an Arabic translation of passports to those persons who request this service. A total of 939 translations were carried out during 2009.

Total Number of Passports issued in 2007-2008				
	Passports Issued		Revenue	
	<i>2008</i>	<i>2009</i>	<i>2008</i> €	<i>2009</i> €
Malta	28,859	28,233	853,992	1,466,513
Gozo	2,199	1,944	60,532	105,176
Missions	2,450	2,332	103,091	184,996
Diplomatic	85	102	1,503	3,570
Total	33,593	32,611	1,019,118	1,760,255

COMMON DATABASE

The Common Database (CdB) is a corporate initiative aimed at providing commonly used information that falls under the public domain and serves to achieve information consistency across government departments. The primary objectives of the CdB are basically to produce a repository for commonly used information which is in the public domain to be shared among government departments, and to facilitate the one-stop-shop concept in government departments.

Thus the Common Database System integrates public domain information that is commonly used amongst government departments and which is available in computerised systems. Established security and audit procedures are in place to ensure proper use of the available data, particularly in conformity with Data Protection legislation.

The information contained in the CdB concerns persons and their addresses and furthermore an Organisations Area of Information is gathered from the Public Registry, the Electoral Office and the VAT Department. This is validated against predefined rules so as to ensure data integrity and quality. Those

transactions that pass the validation rules update the respective records inside the CdB. The source department verifies transactions that fail the validation process. Government departments run the query module to conduct searches as required. Therefore they can view information that is current, consistent, and correct on daily basis. A mechanism is also provided so that feedback on the integrity and quality of the data is obtained from different users. Action is taken accordingly to rectify the information after investigations are carried out.

BIRTH/DEATH NOTIFICATION SECTION

This Section may be considered as the front office for the registration of all births and deaths occurring in Malta. Following notification, the relative Acts are drawn up and checked before being delivered to the Public Registry for registration. This is an important process which must ensure that the details submitted by the notifier are correct.

Total Number of Notifications received in 2008-2009				
	Births		Deaths	
	2008	2009	2008	2009
Malta	3,998	3,977	2,902	3,023
Gozo	311	240	249	292
Total	4,309	4,217	3,151	3,315

E-ID OFFICE

The administrative and operational activities within the e-ID Office were consolidated during the outgoing year. The administrative end was strengthened following the recruitment of an Assistant Director, whilst a call for the Position of Identity Management Officer was issued.

Throughout the year an ongoing internal exercise to review procedures and manuals was implemented with a view towards strengthening procedures and ensure standardisation. During the year particular attention was given towards initiatives aimed at the continuous improvement and security issuance of e-ID credentials. In this respect, a print to mail device was procured for use in the issuance of Activation Pin Numbers. The e-ID Office throughout the year identified and requested a number of enhancements to the eGov Framework.

The Office experienced an increase in registrations with the number of new e-ID registrations during 2009, reaching 5,907, a mark-up of 41% over the previous year which was the first whole year of the new e-ID registration system. This centralised system is an improvement on the former registration process. As at 31 December 2009 the total number of e-ID registrants reached 12,670.

The e-ID Office continued to offer support services through the Help Desk, such services were extended during different periods of the year to support deadlines particularly related to eServices offered by the Inland Revenue Department. The Help Desk serviced a total of 2,946 requests during the year.

A number of meetings were held with eService providers with a view to establish an information sharing network, and strengthen relations with organisations offering eServices enabled by the e-ID.

The e-ID Office carried out identity verification and authentication checks of national Identity Card holders applying for an e-Passport. During 2009 the Office carried out a total of 20,476 identity verifications.

DR STEPHANIE PAPPALARDO
Director General (Land & Public Registry Division)



**Ministry for Resources
and Rural Affairs**

Paying Agency

OBJECTIVE

The Maltese Paying Agency was established to administer the European Agricultural Funds. These subsidies fall both under direct payments as well as under the Rural Development Programme.

The Paying Agency's main aim is to administer, in an efficient manner, the funds under the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and National Funds so that these subsidies reach the farmers and the herdsmen within the shortest time possible. Moreover, the Agency serves as a catalyst so that the Agriculture Sector is informed with the opportunities and challenges that exist under the CAP reform and how they can achieve success through the correct use of these funds so that the sector can advance and grow while respecting good environmental and agricultural practices.

The Paying Agency was established so that it could process requests for aid from European Funds under Direct Aid schemes both on land and on animals. Other requests for financial aid are addressed through the Rural Development Programme.

FRONT OFFICE

The Front Office Section within the Paying Agency (PA) was officially set up in August 2009. The tasks of the Front Office are:

- Receipt of area aid applications
- Provide and promote correct information to the applicants mainly related to obligations of the majority of measures issued by the PA;
- Provide information to applicants regarding payments issued by the PA;
- Receipt of objection forms related to debtor's letters and forwarding them to other units to provide feedback;
- Receipt of documentation requested by other units from applicants
- Receipt of requests for registration and withdrawals of parcels on the Land Parcel Identification System;
- Receipt of requests for transfers, withdrawals and new registrations regarding Less Favoured Areas and Agri-Environmental Schemes.
- Carrying out of convocations regarding administrative anomalies (double claims)
- Keep agricultural entities up to date with any changes proposed by the PA.
- Archiving of all documentation related to beneficiaries
- Coordination of activities with the Paying Agency Front Office in Gozo

Statistics – Area Aid Applications 2009

The list of measures for which applications were received and the total number of applications is as follows:

Rural Development Plan (2004-2006)

Over 800 applications were received for the renewal of commitments for Agri-environmental measures for applications submitted in 2005 and 2006: Rubble Walls; Organic; Autochthonous.

Rural Development Plan 2007-2013 (Axis II)

M212 – Over 5,800 new applications and renewal of commitments for less favoured areas were received

M214 – Over 2,000 new applications and renewal of commitments for the following Agri-Environmental Measures were received:

- AEM1: Use of environmentally friendly plant protection products in vineyards
- AEM 2: Traditional cultivation of silla through crop rotation
- AEM 3: Low input farming
- AEM 4: Suppress the use of herbicides in vineyards and fruit orchards
- AEM 5: Establishment and maintenance of conservation buffer strips
- AEM 6: Conservation of rural structures providing a natural habitat for fauna and flora
- AEM 7: Providing a healthy forage area for bees
- AEM 8: Support for Organic Farming
- AEM 9: Support for the Conservation of species in danger of genetic erosion

Land Based National Aid (SMPPMA)

- Additional Aid for Vines
- Tomatoes for processing
- Potato Scheme
- Fruit and Vegetables

Total: Over 3,700 applications

Single Payment Scheme

- Renewal of entitlements
- Declaration of interest for the issue of entitlements for tomatoes for processing

Total: Over 4,900 applications

Statistics - Front Office Requests in 2009

Between August 2009 and the end of December 2009, the total number of front office requests amounted to more than 1,700. These were classified as:

Queries and Requests	Total
LPIS requests	183
Amending of Applications	1
Change personal details	3
Checking of Payments	257
Co-cultivators requests	1
Convocation 08/09	17
Data request	43
Handing in of Documentation	865
Information Requests	364
Request for information	29
Signing of required documentation	35
Total	1,798

LAND BASED MEASURES UNIT

Objective

The Land Based Measures Unit is responsible for the administration and implementation of the Agri-Environmental measures (AXIS II) and the Single Payment Scheme.

The aim of the Land Based Measures Unit is to administer, in an efficient way, the funds under the Rural Development Programme 2004-2006, the Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 and the Single Payment Scheme.

Implementation of RDP (2004-2006) funded through the EAGGF/ERDF Guarantee Fund

Rural Development Programme 2004-2006

During 2009, the Land Based Measures Unit continued to monitor the agri-environmental measures under RDP 2004-2006 which include the Conservation of Autochthonous Species – Maltese Ox/Holm Oak, Restoration of Rubble Walls and Organic Farming. These measures were paid from the Old RDP 2004-2006 (EAGGF) and a re-performance of the calculation of payments was carried out in 2009.

Measure	Amount	Beneficiaries
Conservation of Autochthonous- Maltese Ox (2008 claim)	€7,428.00	1
Holm Oak (2006, 2007 and 2008 claims)	€3,439.31	9
Organic (2006, 2007 and 2008 claims)	€14,825.98	6
Rubble Walls (2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008 claims)	€ 1,587,867.18	910

Implementation of RDP (2007-2013) funded through the ERDF Guarantee Fund

Rural Development Programme 2007-2013

During 2009, the Unit monitored the Less Favoured Area and Agri-Environmental Measures under RDP 2007-2013. Agri-environmental measures compensated farmers for voluntarily entering a 5 year commitment to carry out actions considered to be of benefit to the environment. Different actions carried different levels of support, however, across all measures the payment was calculated on an area basis.

Measure	Amount	Beneficiaries
Less Favoured Area (2007 claim)	€1,747,917.27	4,834
Less Favoured Area (2008 claim)	€2,010,643.42	5,779
Less Favoured Area (2009 claim)*	€1,748,663.65	5,236
Agri-environmental measures (2008 claim)	€475,506.39	1,101

* There are pending payments for claim year 2009

Implementation of the Single Payment Scheme

The main purpose of the Single Payment Scheme is to try and achieve one of the main objectives set by the CAP reform, which is to try and produce and cultivate what the market demands, while trying to eliminate excess supply.

Land entitlements were calculated at €213.534 per hectare and were named either normal or authorised entitlements on the IT application. On the other hand Livestock and Dairy entitlements (Special L/D) were paid in blocks of €5,000. The Single Payment Scheme requires that payments during this 5 year period are paid at 40% in 2007 and increased by 10% each year until the full 100% is paid in 2013.

In 2008, Malta adopted the Fruit and Vegetable reform, which was directed to support the sector of Tomato for processing. Farmers willing to receive these entitlements had to show their interest during the 2008 application campaign. The entitlements were allocated by December 2008 and the first payment was issued in June 2009. Each entitlement of 1ha amounted to € 4,480.37 and was paid at 100%.

During 2009, the normal wine entitlements were allocated to those farmers who had declared parcels with vines, in 2008 and applied again in 2009. This is to ensure that there is a continuation in the vines sector.

Measure	Amount	Beneficiaries
Single Payment Schemes (2008 claim)	€3,565,54	5,980

Non- IACS Based

Trade Mechanisms

Imports and Exports

During 2009 the Trade Mechanisms Unit concluded a Memorandum of Understanding wherein the Unit and the Customs agreed to co-operate and exchange information with respect to imports and exports statistics, documentation and regulations updates. The unit issued 136 Import Licences, mostly on surveillance (full duty applicable) basis.

Producer Groups and Producer Organisations

The Unit took over this measure late in 2009. The relative guidelines including criteria and application forms have been finalised. Applications will be received during the first weeks of 2010.

Social Aid Section

School Milk Scheme

A total of 51 primary schools and a secondary school participated in this scheme. In all 15,800 students consumed over 137,000 kg milk which is partly subsidised by the European Commission. The total cost incurred by the schools was €95,951 while the subsidy amounted to €24,914.

School Fruit Scheme

A tender for the supply and delivery of fruit and vegetables to children attending kinder and primary state and non-state schools in Malta and Gozo was issued and awarded to a local Producer Group. Preparatory work was carried out to introduce the scheme and to lay down the framework for the launching in January 2010. This scheme is co-financed by the EU (75%).

Aid for the Deprived

During 2009 three tenders were issued, comprising of 25 tonnes rice, 83 tonnes pasta and €387,700 worth of milk and milk products. In addition, 571 tonnes of jam processed from sugar allocated from intervention stocks were delivered from Italy to Malta. Distribution was made on a monthly basis to around 120 parishes and organisations from which around 25,000 persons who were eligible for aid benefitted from such activity.

National Aid

SMPPMA

During 2009 €12,155,840 were paid to beneficiaries for measures which included Pig Meat, Dairy, Broilers, Eggs, Fruit and Vegetables, Vines and Wineries and Tomatoes.

Food Subsidies on imports

Food subsidies were paid on imported meat (€ 171,542) and tomatoes (€ 3,518).

CONTROL UNIT

Background

The Control Unit is one of the functions within the Paying Agency responsible for coordinating and conducting on-the-spot checks related to eligibility and cross compliance and the administration of the Land Parcel Identification System. The unit is also responsible for the implementation of Farm Advisory Service in accordance with article 12 of R. 73/2009.

Activities and Results

Controls

In 2009, the Control Unit conducted approximately 23,306 on-the-spot inspections on agricultural land parcels and livestock farms on 1,618 beneficiaries. Out of these, 7,717 parcels were controlled for cross compliance, 5,775 parcels for Single Payment Scheme, 7,050 parcels for Less Favoured Areas and 862 parcels for Agri-Environmental Measures.

In 2009 the Control Unit developed new risk analysis criteria and methodology to select the control sample for the control of area aid applications. In this regard, the number of inspections were considerably reduced, but still reached the minimum control rates for all schemes. Following the evaluation, the control rate for area aid applications was reduced from 18% in 2008 to 6% in 2009.

The 2009 inspections were performed during the period August – October 2009. The progress of inspections was monitored on a weekly basis. This year the Control Unit introduced the use of PC tablets for the inputting of non-geographic data, together with printed maps. With the introduction of the new methodology, the controls were performed together with cross compliance controls and completed within a period of 12 weeks. Although this involved the increase of resources in terms of staff, extra hours and transport, the fact that all the controls were performed in one visit reduced the costs. Although the control sample for cross compliance was quite extensive, the Control Unit still managed to complete the controls within the stipulated timeframes. This was achieved by better organisation of the controls, use of tablet PCs and the engagement of additional staff

The Cross Compliance Legal Notice LN346 of 2005 was amended by LN207/2009 to reflect the changes introduced in 2008. The revised regulation included the GAEC obligations and details of the new penalty system.

LPIS

Before the 2009 application campaign, the Control Unit completed the refresh of the LPIS eligible area for all the parcels, based on the 2008 orthophotos. Following the communication of the audit findings in 2008, a decision to re-create the LPIS to be in line with the Commission working documents was taken. This task was subcontracted to an Italian company – AGRI-IDEA. The new exercise involved the digitizing of the reference parcels to fit on the 2008 orthophotos, snapping of the parcels to remove gaps and updating of the land use to fit the new parcels. The re-creation exercise was completed at the end of December 2009. The updating of the LPIS included the integration of 2008/2009 on-the-spot data. At the end of the exercise 61,700 parcels were updated.

Farm Advisory Service (FAS)

The Farm Advisory Service Registration Board was set up in 2009, and is made up of 5 committee members and a secretary to establish a proper protocol for the official registration, establishment and renewal procedures for Farm Advisory Services. The first task of the board was to amend the national legislation L.N. 41 of 2008 pertaining to the set up of Farm Advisory Services. Issues concerning

member's participation and avoidance of conflicts of interests were all considered, during the amendment of the L.N. Emphasis was mostly made to ensure a transparent and effective policy for the Farm Advisory Service to be recognised and registered by the Farm Advisory Service Registration Board.

PAYMENTS FUNCTION

During 2009 the Paying Agency effected payments to beneficiaries for measures shown below:

EAGF

Measure	Amount
Operational funds for producer organisations - 2008	224,190.03
Tomatoes for Processing - marketing year 07/08	21,841.06
Aid to Producer Groups - 2008	112,023.20
Specific aid for bee-keeping - Programme 2009	4,792.73
Single Payment Scheme Claim Year 2007	1,276.30
Single Payment Scheme Claim Year 2008	2,669,641.97
Beef Special premium - calendar year 2006	1,323.00
Total	3,035,088.29

EAGF

(Rural Development Programme 2004-2006)

Measure	Amount
Autochthonous	10,867.31
Full-time farmers/animal breeders in Malta	200,046.13
LFA	60.15
Meeting Standards	601,172.10
Organic	12,859.18
Rubble Walls	1,550,872.97
Technical Assistance	228,443.93
Total	2,604,321.77

EAGF

(Rural Development Programme 2007-2013)

Measure	Amount
Modernisation of agricultural holdings	804,435.72
Less Favoured Areas Claim Years 2007, 2008 & 2009	5,249,431.58
Agri-environment 2008	462,441.92
Technical assistance	386,629.43
Total	6,902,938.65

National Funds

Measure	Amount
Potatoes (claim Year 2007)	141,438.86
Potatoes (claim Year 2008)	134,770.54
Wine sector - new plantings - marketing year 2005	6,778.03
Wine sector - new plantings - marketing year 2006	19,607.01
Wine sector - additional aid marketing year 2006	1,417.15
Wine sector - additional aid marketing year 2007	443,398.69
Beef Special premium - calendar year 2006	2,457.00
Tomatoes for Processing marketing year 07/08	3,503.05
Single Payment Scheme - CNDP 2008	823,864.96
Total	1,577,235.29

PUBLICATION OF DATA

As from 30 April 2009, the Paying Agency published data related to payments effected during Financial Year 2008. The data was published on the webpage of the Paying Agency (<http://www.agric.gov.mt/agric-pa/>). This was carried out in line with the requirements of Commission Regulation (EC) No 259/2008. When implementing this regulation the Paying Agency took notice to abide with Data Protection Regulations.

ACCOUNTS FUNCTION

The Accounts Unit is responsible for: debt management; statistical and expenditure reporting; financial clearance year-end processes (closure of accounts); and financial / management accounting.

The Paying Agency (PA) effects a substantial number of payments under both funds, EAGF (European Agricultural Guarantee Fund) and EAFRD (European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development), including two Rural Development programmes, as follows:

- Rural Development Programme 2004-2006;
- Rural Development Programmes 2007-2013;
- Direct Payments and other measures.

The first Rural Development Plan (2004-2006) was closed on 30 June, with the final RD declaration sent on the 29 of December 2009. The Paying Agency's management managed to utilise 98% of the EU funds available (€26.9 million). The EU Commission's approving decision of this closure of programme is expected by end of April 2010.

Clearance of its Financial Expenditure

The Paying Agency succeeded in obtaining Clearance of its Accounts from the Commission for the RDP 2004 – 2006 and for EAGF for financial years 2007 – 2008.

Debt Management

The debt management process was re-visited to ensure the effectiveness of the controls in place, as well as increasing additional management tools to increase effective debt management. The Accounts function ensured that all entries are duly entered in the Debtors' Ledger so as to ensure effective recovery. To be able to reach these objectives the unit introduced a number of controls and debt management tools.

INVESTMENT MEASURES UNIT

Objective

The objective of the Investment Measures Unit (IMU) is to manage the execution of the Investment Project Type measures that form part of the Rural Development Programme for European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD).

During the first half of 2009, the Unit was responsible for the closure of the Rural Development Programme 2004 – 2006. These included:

- Measure 3.2 – Improving the Marketing and Processing of Agricultural Products
- Meeting Standards Measure, and
- Ad Hoc Measure

In addition, throughout 2009, the IMU was responsible for the execution and authorisation of payments of the various measures funded under the Rural Development Programme 2007 – 2013 through the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD).

Rural development programme 2007 – 2013

Implementation of the Rural Development Plan for Malta 2007-2013

During 2009, the IMU issued the first calls for the following Investment Project Type Measures under the Rural Development Programme 2007 – 2013:

Axis 1

Measure	Title
M114	Use of Advisory Services by Farmers
M115	Setting Up of Farm Advisory Services
M121	Modernisation of Agricultural Holdings
M123	Adding Value to Agricultural Products
M124	Co-operation for Development of New Products, Processes and Technologies in the Agriculture and Food Sectors
M132	Participation of Farmers in Food Quality Schemes
M133	Information and Promotion Activities on Food Quality Schemes
M142	Setting Up of Producer Groups

Axis 3

Measure	Title
M313	Encouragement of Tourism Activities
M323	Conservation and Upgrading of the Rural Heritage
M341	Skills Acquisition and Animation with a View to Preparing and Implementing a Local Development Strategy

MANAGING AUTHORITY FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

The Managing Authority (MA) is responsible for the programming, publicity, management and development of the Rural Development Programme (RDP) for the period 2007-2013, in direct collaboration with the Paying Agency. Apart from the implementation of the RDP at programme level, the MA has a very important role in policy matters relating with the future of the Common Agricultural Policy, the prospective delimitation system for the Less Favoured Areas, simplification, and other rural development aspects in coordination with the EU Affairs Directorate of the MRRRA. The MA is also responsible for the setting up and management of the National Rural Network (NRN) together with the Leader programme as part of the implementing tools of the RDP.

RDP 2007-2013 - EAFRD**Programme Implementation***M 121 – Modernisation of Agricultural Holdings*

Applications under Measure 121 were submitted in January. Out of a total of 358 submissions, 181 applicants for this measure were contracted and they have been awarded with a grant for the modernisation of their agricultural holdings.

Measures	No of Beneficiaries	<i>Measures 121 Contracted Beneficiaries</i>			
		Total Forecasted Expenditure Excluding VAT	Total Grants	EU Amounts	Malta Amounts
121	181	€ 27,350,881.16	€ 12,826,514.23	€ 9,619,885.67	€ 3,206,628.56

In February 2009, the following six measures were launched:

- M 114 – Use of Farm Advisory Services
- M 115 – Setting up of Farm Advisory Services
- M 123 – Adding Value to Agricultural Products
- M 313 – Encouragement of Tourism Activities
- M 323 – Conservation and upgrading of the rural heritage
- M 341 – Skills acquisition and animation with a view to preparing and implementing a Local Development Strategy

In total 122 applications were received for the six measures.

M212- Less Favoured Areas, M 214 – Agri-Environment

In March 2009, the third call for submissions under Measure 212 and the second call for submissions under Measure 214 Sub-Measures 1 to 9 were launched. There were a total of 5,846 submissions for Measure 212 and 2,130 submissions for assistance under Measure 214. For both Measures, the number of submissions corresponds to new applications as well as payment claims of the commitments originating from previous years.

In September 2009, the MA launched the following additional five measures:

M111- Training, Information and Diffusion of Knowledge,

M 124 – Co-operation for development of new products, processes and technologies in the agriculture and food sector,

M 132 – Participation of farmers in food quality schemes, Information and promotion activities on food quality schemes,

M133 – Information and promotion activities on food quality schemes.

M 142- Setting up of Producer Groups,

In total, 22 applications were received for Measures 124, 132, 133 & 142. Submissions for Measure 111 will close in 2010.

Measures launched in February 2009

Measures	No of Applications	Applicants' Expenditure Excluding Vat	Allocation Public Expenditure
114	-	Nil	€ 3,000,000
115	5	€ 484,000.00 ¹	€ 600,000
123	29	€ 6,150,382.82	€ 7,000,000
313	45	€ 23,634,774.89	€ 7,000,000
323	38	€ 43,214,375.08	€ 21,000,000
341	4	€ 360,000.00	€ 450,000
Total	121	€ 73,843,532.79	€ 39,050,000

Measures launched in September 2009

Measures	No of Applications	Applicants' Claims Excluding Vat	EU Amounts	Allocation Public Expenditure
111	Deadline for submissions in January 2010			
124	3	Under Review	Under Review	€ 1,000,000
132	8	€ 21,023.73	€ 8,927.81	€ 500,000
133	-	-	-	€ 200,000
142	11	€ 854,558.00	€ 640,918.00	€ 990,000
Total	22	€ 875,581.73	€ 649,845.81	€ 2,690,000

Measure 341 – Skills acquisition and animation with a view to preparing and implementing a Local Development Strategy

Contracting and implementation of Measure 341 was affected for the management of Local Development Strategies (LDS). The Foundations contracted are composed of Local Councils that are bordering localities, as well as economic and social parties, civil society organisations and public entities within a public-private partnership. Once the LDS are fully developed the Foundations are to apply for the status of Local Action Groups under the Leader Programme (Axis 4 of the RDP).

¹ The figure quoted is an approximation

Four applications were submitted for Measure 341. Three applicants were successfully selected and were each awarded a grant of € 90,000, excluding VAT. Following further discussion with the Commission, the Managing Authority awarded with the part provision of VAT from EU funds, making VAT an eligible expense for this Measure.

Measures	No of Beneficiaries	<i>Measures 341 Contracted Beneficiaries</i>		
		Total Grants	EU Amounts	Malta Amounts
341	3	€ 270,000	€ 202,500	€ 67,500

Policy

In 2009, the MA was involved in a number of policy matters pertaining to rural development and the future of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

One milestone of particular relevance was the reaction to the requirements of COM (2009) 161 on the setting up of a new delimitation system for the Less Favoured Areas. A simulation exercise was carried out on the delimitation system proposed by the Commission for the future CAP. The MA assessed available national data on climate, soil moisture, soil texture and stoniness, soil drainage, soil chemical properties, rooting depth and terrain slope. This exercise was done against thresholds proposed by the Commission. Additional thresholds to those provided by the Commission were also taken into consideration in a separate proposal.

National Rural Network

The Maltese National Rural Network (NRN) was set according to Art 68 of EC Regulation 1698/2005 in order to develop and maintain channels of communication through information activities, thematic sessions, exchange of experiences and share of good practices in between all local parties that have an interest or are directly involved in the operations of the RDP, as well as to create communication networks in the international fora, particularly the European Network for Rural Development (EN RD).

The NRN was officially launched in Malta on 1 July 2009, with the first seminar being that of the National Rural Network. The MA also set up an NRN Unit for the coordination of the activities of the Network and the management of the Local Actions Groups (LAGs) for the Leader Programme. The Unit has been busy in drawing up an action plan for the NRN, drafting the operating rules for the Local Action Groups and the setting up of the work plan for the Steering and Coordination Committee

Additionally, the MA makes representations in ENRD meetings. In 2009, six meetings were held focusing, amongst others, on the sharing of good practices, links between the Leader and other Axis, the application of social network tools, websites and other broadband solutions and the management of databases.

Leader

With the closure of projects committed under Measure 341 in December 2009, the Xlokk, Majjistral and Gozo Foundations have terminated the preparation of their Local Development Strategies. It is now in the pipeline that Measure 41 is launched in 2010, so that the Foundations be certified as LAGs and start to implement the Leader programme. The LAGs will also be assigning funds under Action Type 3 of Measure 125 and Action Types 3 and 4 of Measure 313.

Technical Assistance

The MA is responsible for the management and approval of requests for the support of technical assistance. The eligible beneficiaries under this measure are the Paying Agency, the Managing Authority and other Government Departments, delegated services and NGOs that all have connections with activities

for the implementation of the RDP. These requests are subject to eligibility checks and other controls. The EAFRD Technical Assistance (Axis 5 of the RDP 2007-13) supports actions related to the preparation and programming, management and support, monitoring, evaluation, information and controls, information and publicity.

Most of the technical assistance is addressed to the development of an integrated IT system that caters for the whole implementation of the programme from the submission of the applications for EU funding to the declarations of expenditure to the Commission, being the last step in the process.

Technical Assistance committed for funding in 2009 by Actions

Actions	EU Amounts	EU Co-financing Rate
Preparation & Programming	€ 21,377.73	75%
Management & Support	€ 97,724.90	75%
Monitoring	€ 24,593.17	75%
Evaluation	€ 20,925.00	75%
Information	€ 37,317.05	75%
Control Function	€ 108,687.19	75%
Total	€ 310,625.04	75%

Monitoring Committee

The Monitoring Committee is made up of government representatives, including officers from the Managing Authority for Rural Development, representatives from the European Commission, representatives from social and economic partners, representatives from the civil society and other affiliated organisations. The functions of the Monitoring Committee transpire in Article 78 of Council Regulation 1698/2005.

In 2009 three Monitoring Committee meetings were organised. The 3rd Committee meeting, which took place in March 2009, approved the selection criteria for Measures 114, 115, 123, 313, 323 and 341. The 4th Committee meeting of May 2009 approved the selection criteria for Measures 124, 125, 132, 133 and 142, as well as the Annual Progress Report for 2008. During the 5th Committee meeting, approval was given for the selection criteria for Measure 41 and new modifications were approved. Through written procedure, the modifications of the NSP and the RDP in relation to the additional budget deriving from the European Economic Recovery Package were carried out in July.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The tender for the provisions of services regarding the drafting of ongoing evaluations, as well as the Mid-term Evaluation to the RDP 2004-06, were published. The ex-post report for the RDP 2004-06 and the revisions to the baseline indicators for the new programme were submitted to the Commission.

European Evaluation Network for Rural Development

The MA, together with geographical expert Mr John Grieve, hosted the second meeting of the Focus Group for the European Evaluation Network for Rural Development. Mr Grieve is responsible for the coordination of focus groups for the Evaluation Network for Rural Development in Malta, England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland. The scope of the meeting was mainly to discuss the objectives of ongoing evaluation as well as to pave the way for the upcoming Mid-term Evaluation that is to be developed and submitted to the European Commission by end 2010.

The Mid-term Evaluation is aimed at proposing measures to improve the quality of the programme and its implementation and to examine the utilised resources, the effectiveness and efficiency of the RDP and its impact on the Community priorities following the execution of half the funding programme for EAFRD.

Rural Development Committee

The Rural Development Committee (RDC) presides over the implementation of the Rural Development Programmes of each Member State and is regularly held in Brussels. The Committee provides the different member states with the opportunity to have a say in important policy decisions, financial corrections and programme revisions that have an effect on rural development at a national and supranational level.

The revisions to the RDP of Malta came into effect with the approval from the 38th RDC in November 2009 amending Commission Decision C (2008)730. The revisions saw an additional influx of EU funds amounting to € 1.02 million, which derived from the reallocation following the Health Check & Recovery Package. All of the additional funds were addressed by the Maltese Government to Measure 121.

Publicity

This year saw the drafting of the Communication Plan, which was submitted for the Commission's approval. The Action Plan consists of the strategy to be undertaken as regards the provision of information and publicity to the RDP 2007-13.

SPD 2004-2006 MEASURES 3.1 & 3.2 – EAGGF: GUIDANCE SECTION

Introduction

In 2008, Malta requested an extension of the Single Programming Document to the end of June 2009, this extension was given in March 2009. No calls for applications were launched in 2009 for the measures falling within the Guidance Section. The focus was on absorbing the savings remaining under the Guidance Fund. In this respect, one beneficiary who dropped out of the application for funding due to the inability to complete the investment by end of December 2008, was contracted with the remaining funds available in the light of the extension till June 2009.

The two measures falling within the Guidance Section were:

Measure 3.1 – Investment in Agricultural Holdings

Measure 3.1 was aimed at supporting investments in agricultural holdings with the objective of improving the economic performance at farm level through gains in productivity and competitiveness in line with EC Regulation 1257/1999 and to promote the diversification of farm activities. In 2009, no payments were made from the EAGGF-Guidance Fund for this measure.

Measure 3.2 – Improving the Processing and Marketing of Agricultural Products

Measure 3.2 was aimed at enhancing the economic performance of the agricultural sector by supporting investments in the marketing and processing chain.

Measure	Public Expenditure 2009	Beneficiaries
3.2	€106,479.10	1

RDP 2004-2006 – EAGGF: GUARANTEE SECTION

Introduction

In December 2008, Malta requested an extension of the Temporary Rural Development Instrument 2004-2006 (Guarantee Section) until the end of June 2009. The extension was granted on the RDP 2004-06 in

March 2009. No applications were launched during this period. The focus was on the execution of the remaining payments.

The TRDI mainly consisted of the following measures:

- Agri-Environmental Measures,
- Less Favoured Area Measure,
- Meeting Standards Measure,
- Ad Hoc Measures,
- Technical Assistance

Agri-Environmental Measures

Under the TRDI, the Agri-Environmental Measures (AEMs) were three, namely,

- the Restoration of Terraced Retaining Rubble Walls,
- the Conservation of Autochthonous Species namely the Maltese Holm Oak and Maltese Ox Species, and
- the Promotion of Organic Farming.

The following table shows details of beneficiaries and the related payments effected in 2009 for the respective measures:

Measure	Public Expenditure 2009	Beneficiaries
Restoration of Terraced Retaining Rubble Walls	€ 1,587,867.18	1,935
Conservation of Autochthonous Species		
Maltese Holm Oak	€ 3,439.31	16
Maltese Ox Species	€ 7,428.00	1
Promotion of Organic Farming	€ 14,826.03	16

AEMs are transitional measures. This means that committed grants under these measures can recur from one programming period to another. In fact, some of these commitments from the old program have been approved for funding through the new program.

Less Favoured Areas

The Less Favoured Area (LFA) measure consists of direct payments to owners of agricultural land that is to compensate for specific handicaps that affects their farming. In 2009, no payments were made from the EAGGF-Guarantee Fund for the LFA measure. All LFA payments in 2009 derived from the EAFRD RDP programme through Measure 212.

Meeting Standards Measure

In Malta's particular case, aid under the Meeting Standards Measure was limited to the compliance with the Nitrates Directive 91/676/EC and contributed to one specific objective that is to help farmers adapt their storage capacity for manure and slurry to the requirements of the Directive.

Measure	Public Expenditure 2009	Beneficiaries
Meeting Standards	€ 588,412.10	44

Ad Hoc Measures

The Ad hoc measures were to provide assistance to support farmers to address the gaps in farm income and cash flow during the period following accession in a time when restructuring was much needed in terms of technology, management and husbandry systems.

Type	Public Expenditure 2009	Beneficiaries
Ad Hoc Land Based	€ 48,479.29	173
Ad Hoc Livestock Breeders	Nil	Nil

Technical Assistance

In 2009, payments for technical assistance from the 2004-06 TRDI amounted to € 228,443.93 and were mainly directed towards the development of the program evaluations, the provision of services for technical consultancy and the development of the IT system.

Programme Completion

The TRDI programme was completed with the submission of the final declaration of expenditure. In total, € 26,353,125.83 of EAGGF funds were spent from the TRDI, reaching an absorption rate of 98% of the indicative EU budget in the RDP 2004-06.

JOSEPH CARUANA
Head, Paying Agency

Fish and Farming Regulation and Control Division

ANIMAL HEALTH AND WELFARE

Farm Visits

Ruminant Farms

During the year, 187 dairy farm visits were carried out for brucellosis and leucosis sampling on dairy farms, and a further 171 visits for tuberculosis testing have been carried out on dairy farms.

12,564 bovines were sampled for brucellosis/leucosis and 13,997 bovines were injected for tuberculosis testing. A further 142 bovines and 163 bovines have to be added to these, consisting of bovines which came from farms that were previously dairy producers and became meat producers in the course of the year; the former (142 bovines) were tested for brucellosis whilst the latter (163 bovines) were tested for tuberculosis. Therefore the total is 12,706 tests on bovines for brucellosis-leucosis and 14,160 tests on bovines for tuberculosis in Malta inland only.

Two sampling sessions were carried out on each farm. Almost all of the farms were sampled in time intervals ranging from four to six months in line with Annex A and D of the Council Directive 98/46/EC.

On small ruminant holdings, 16,488 heads were tested for brucellosis in Malta while another 4,960 heads were tested in Gozo.

In Gozo, all dairy farms were tested for TB, brucellosis and leucosis. In total 210 herds were visited, and out of these 8407 heads were tested for brucellosis, tuberculosis and leucosis; while 375 heads were tested for bluetongue.

Poultry Farms

During 2009, a full round of welfare inspections were carried out on all laying hen farms. During these inspections, the Salmonella Control Programme was initiated and samples for the necessary testing were taken. These inspections were carried out during June/July 2009, and in total 50 visits were carried out. During these visits, a full welfare inspection was carried out with the measurement of all cages and recalculation of farm capacities. Further important information that was collected included the separation of capacities in enriched cages and un-enriched cages. It was concluded that there are 41.44% of the total national capacity in enriched cages that are suitable for operation after 2012 when all un-enriched cages will be banned from use.

Further routine visits were carried out on broiler farms, where every batch of broilers is being tested for salmonella before slaughter.

From laying hen farms, egg samples were collected as part of the National Residue Plan. During 2009, a total of 212 egg samples were collected. These farms are also being tested for salmonella every 15 weeks.

Pig Production

Tattooing in the year 2009 amounted to 107,555 heads. This is an increase of 2.12% over the year 2008. Mortality stands at about 9.65%.

The market demand for local pork during this year shows a downward trend. This can be seen from the slaughter of 2009 (table below) - which was 11.72% lower than that for 2008. The weight has also gone down from 8,497.0 metric tons to 7,368.7 metric tons. The percentage grade/quality of the meat is mostly A1 and A2. In addition, there was the importation of 1,903.55 metric tons of pork-meat – from January till November 2009.

The average carcass weight was 81.7 kgs. The value of production was equivalent to €12.53 million.

The replacement of gilts during year was increased by 17.5% over the year 2008.

Slaughter of Pork in 2009					
Malta		Gozo		Totals	
Quantity	Wt/Kgs				
90,140	7,368,645	0	0	90,140	7,368,645
				<i>Average Weight</i>	<i>81,7kg</i>

Poultry Production

The total number of hatching eggs imported was 4,331,520 broiler eggs and 235,000 laying eggs. Other livestock imports included 57,597 pullets at point of lay and 47,500 day-old layers.

Out of these, there were 3,103,248 day-old broiler chicks hatched and distributed to licensed broiler farms and 179,579 layers (including day-old layers and pullets).

The total annual broiler production for 2009 amounted to a slaughter of 2,817,300 broilers with 7,248,530kg live weight. This gave an average weight of 2.57kg.

Identification and Registration

During 2009, a total of 26 warning letters were sent in relation to infringements of Identification & Registrations regulations. Furthermore, seven letters of penalties were sent and three farmers paid the fine of €3,883, while four are still pending. Out of all inspections carried out during the year, 20 are still not concluded. During 2009, there were a total of 2,427 re-tags ordered for bovine, ovines and caprines.

<i>General information on animals and inspections</i>		
Holdings registered in Malta and Gozo as at the beginning of 2009		302
Holdings inspected		169
Inspections made		169
Bovine livestock registered at the beginning of the reporting period		17,729
Bovines in inspected holdings		14,084
<i>Breach Found by category animals' holdings</i>		
	Animals	Holdings
Animal identification failure	4	2
Failure to notify birth, death or movement	151	31
Passport anomalies	N/A	N/A
Animals/holding with only 1 breach listed in point 1-4	100	26
Animals/holding with more than 1 breach listed in point 1-4	61	5
Animals/holding with breaches in total (points 5 & 6)	161	31

<i>Sanctions imposed according to regulation (EC) No 494/98</i>		
	Affected Animals	Affected Holdings
Restriction of movements of individual bovines	Nil	Nil
Restriction of movements of all bovines on the holding	All	14
Destruction of animals	Nil	Nil
Total	0	14

CIVIL ABATTOIR (SLAUGHTER)

During 2009, a total of 6,093 bovines were slaughtered in the civil abattoir, while another 148 bovines were slaughtered at the bovine emergency slaughterhouse.

The number of small ruminants slaughtered in the Civil Abattoir during 2009 was 2,314. During the same period, 46 animals (small ruminants) were slaughtered in the emergency slaughterhouse.

MILK HYGIENE CONTROL

Dairy Cows Farms

- The number of active dairy farms increased from 127 to 132 in 2009.
- This section carried out 120 Dairy and Cheeselet producer inspections in 2009.
- In 2009, the approval status of the dairy farms was: 78 Conditional Approval, 17 farms have been identified and given a Warning (WL), nine of them received the second warning, 10 farms received enforcement action.
- Nine farms received the Close down Letter (CDL). The rest of the farms were constantly under re-inspection to identify the temporary and exact category. (Pending for CA and pending for W and CDL)
- April 2009 - nine proposed Warning and close down farms sold their Milk Quota.
- May 2009 - The second round of inspections regarding the renewal of the Conditional Approval or move to the Full Approval.
- From May to July 2009 - 15 farms were identified and given the Full Approval.
- From January to November - 10 enforcement actions were taken and nine Warning Letters were given.
- In September 2009 – apart from the three close down during the first round of inspection another six farms received a close down letter.
- In September the farms were given 60 days for reactivation.
- During November 2009 a follow-up inspection to the reactivated farms was carried out to verify their status. As a result, one close down letter was revoked due to the fact that several arrangements were made, two farmers declared voluntarily to close down their farms and another three farms were processed definitely as close down and the removal of animals.
- A 5-day training session was given to the farmers.

Dairy Establishment. “Benna” (Malta Dairy Products)

- Six official inspections were carried out in 2009
- Several meetings with quality, administrative and process managers
- One training meeting with the milk distributors
- Three official enforcement actions
- One FVO mission to dairy establishment and cheeselet producer.

Cheeselet Producers

- The work on the cheeselet section started at the end of November 2008 and continued during 2009.
- Official internal meetings with all concerned in the cheeselet industry and within the Competent Authorities were held in December 2008. (Food Safety Commission (FSC) in the Health Department, etc)

- According to the statistical information obtained from FSC, there are 1,300 official cheeselet producers. The first objective of the CA is to identify who of the 1,300 official cheeselet producers have interest in obtaining approval under EU Reg. 853/04.
- The Milk Hygiene Section needs to identify the larger business operators in relation to the number of productive animals.
- From January till December the MHS carried out 60 inspections on the cheeselet operators (first round of inspection as dairy inspection program)

NATIONAL VETERINARY LABORATORY

Aujesky's Disease	
Elisa	768
Avian Influenza	
Elisa	626
AGIDT/Virus neutralisation wild birds	29
New Castle Disease Wild Birds	29
Blue Tongue	
Elisa	2116
PCR	63
Proficiency Tests	1
Brucella	
Rose Bengal Test	47,588
Complement Fixation Test	211
Milk ring test	526
Classical Swine Fever	
Elisa	768
Enzootic Bovine Leucosis	
Elisa	21,514
Proficiency Tests	5
Foot and Mouth (Ovine, caprine, bovine and swine)	
Elisa	1000
Swine Influenza (H1N1)	
Elisa	768
Visna Maedi	
Elisa	715
Antibiotic Residues by Microbial inhibition	
<i>National plan</i>	
Bovine Milk	259
Caprine Milk	11
Bovine Muscle/Kidney	32
Caprine Muscle	0
Swine Muscle/Kidney	33
Equine Muscle	2
Poultry Muscle	49
Poultry Eggs	15
Fish Muscle	1
Rabbit Muscle	6
<i>Suspects</i>	
Bovine Muscle/Kidney/Injection site	58
Swine Muscle/Kidney//Injection site	307
Equine Muscle/kidney//Injection site	80
Poultry Muscle	1
Ovine Muscle/Kidney/Injection site	6
<i>Survey</i>	
Ovine milk	12
Bovine milk	6
Poultry muscle (Within salmonella surveillance)	132
<i>Border Inspection Posts</i>	
Fish	1
Lamb	2
Poultry	1
<i>Feed Stuffs</i>	
Rabbit	1
Poultry	31

Bovine	1
Swine	102
<i>Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathy</i>	
Bovine Slaughter	2756
Bovine Fallen	48
Bovine Emergency	39
Ovine Fallen	64
Caprine Fallen	58
Slaughter ovine/caprine	6
BSE proficiency Tests	2
Scrapie Proficiency Tests	1
Microbiology	
<i>Slaughter House Hygiene</i>	
Bovine Slaughter Total Count	243
Bovine Slaughter Total Coliforms	243
Swine Slaughter Total Count	255
Swine Slaughter Total Coliforms	255
<i>Suspect Microbiology</i>	
Bovine	31
Ovine	2
Swine	73
Equine	60
<i>Parasitology</i>	
Faecal tests pigeons	10
Trichinella	100
<i>Quality Control/ Microbiological Criteria (2073/2005)</i>	
Bovine CarcassTotal Count	10
Bovine CarcassTotal Coliforms	10
Swine CarcassTotal Count	100
Swine CarcassTotal Coliforms	100
Bovine salmonella	3
Swine Salmonella	4
Milk Proficiency test	1
Salmonella Testing	
Total number of batches tested	213
Broiler batches	93
Layer batches	120

TRAINING

Various training sessions were undertaken by officials within this Division in 2009. Twelve officials attended 20 training sessions on related issues.

Apart from these training sessions held abroad, there were other internal training sessions delivered locally by senior management. These included training sessions on *Audits and Internal Audits* and EBL (**Enzootic Bovine Leukosis**). Other training sessions were delivered to field officers on various dates throughout 2009, and these covered areas like Animal Welfare checklists, sampling techniques, and National Livestock Database enhancements.

TRAVEL

During 2009, 14 officials from the Division attended 41 meetings and/or training sessions abroad.

BORDER INSPECTION POSTS

Pet Passport and Intra Community Trade

Border Inspection Post personnel carried out inspection and released 482 dogs and cats and quarantined 148 pets, with a total of 630 pets in 2009.

The tables below indicate the figures related to the importation of live animals and products of animal origin at the Malta International Airport BIP, as well as those related to the importation of products of animal origin at the Malta Freeport BIP during 2009. No consignments of live animals were received at the Grand Harbour BIP during this period.

Malta Freeport Border Inspection Post			
	2009		
	<i>Total No. ⁽¹⁾</i>	<i>Rejected ⁽²⁾</i>	<i>Lab Tests ⁽³⁾</i>
HC-total	371	4	30
Ambient T°	155	-	16
Chilled	11	-	-
Frozen	205	4	14
NHC-total	27	-	-
Ambient T°	29	-	-
Chilled	-	-	-
Frozen	121	-	-
Total Products	519	4	30
U	-	-	-
E	-	-	-
O	-	-	-
Total Live Animals	-	-	-

Malta International Airport Border Inspection Post			
	2009		
	<i>Total No. ⁽¹⁾</i>	<i>Rejected ⁽²⁾</i>	<i>Lab Tests ⁽³⁾</i>
HC-total	205	1	-
Ambient T°	-	-	-
Chilled	205	1	-
Frozen	-	-	-
NHC-total	-	-	-
Ambient T°	-	-	-
Chilled	-	-	-
Frozen	-	-	-
Total Products	205	1	-
U	-	-	-
E	-	-	-
O	153	-	-
Total Live Animals	153	-	-

⁽¹⁾ The number of consignments of products of animal origin fit for human consumption (HC), products of animal origin not fit for human consumption (NHC) with separation into the number of consignments without low temperature requirements and frozen/chilled consignments; the number of consignments of live animals for each category (ungulates, registered equidae and other animals).

⁽²⁾ For each category, the number of rejected consignments

⁽³⁾ For each category, the number of laboratory tests carried out.

FOOD HEALTH

Summary of the activity carried out in 2009 by the Official Veterinarians

Inspections/Visits	125
Corrective Action Requests	8
Warning Letters	2
HAS	18
Audits	12
Internal Audits	1
Meeting for new applicants	36

Total number of poultry carcasses condemned during 2009

Slaughterhouse A	Slaughterhouse B	Slaughterhouse C	Slaughterhouse D	Total
3,248	1,335	2,883	1,964	9,430

FVO Inspections

In 2009, three Food Veterinary Office missions took place:

- *Animal Welfare*: The major issues found by the EU inspectors related to lack of training and consistency on the inspection carried out, lack of human resources and adequate equipment to implement controls, problems related to emergency slaughter and to laying hen enrichment cages.
- *General review*: This was a very big mission, focusing mainly of horizontal issues related to previous missions; a number of recommendations were assessed by the inspectors; areas where actions were still required included import control, food safety and ABP. Staff was the main issue. A number of actions that were previously judged no sufficient were considered favourably and therefore classified as in progress. A good number of pending issues were closed and the FVO inspectors deemed that the Department had taken appropriate actions.
- *Food Safety*: The main area of concern was related to the Civil Abattoir, cheeselets and rabbit sector. Improvements were noted. Still the lack of human resources was considered the major problem together with issues related to the Civil Abattoir.

DR ANTHONY GRUPPETTA

Director General (Fish and Farming Regulation and Control)

Fish & Farming Regulation and Control Division Fisheries Control Department

CONTROL SECTION

From 1 May to 31 July 2009 a Maltese National Expert for the Technical Joint Deployment Group worked at the Community Fisheries Control Agency in Vigo.

Tasks of Seconded National Experts:

- Follow up of Mission Forms
- Forwarding Recommendations to the Inspection Means
- Follow up of Missions and their Outcome
- Maintaining the TJDG operative during the first and second shift hours and weekends
- Information Management.

During the year, ongoing training, briefings and debriefings on a day-to-day basis were provided to the Fisheries Protection Officers, particularly with regard to the swordfish closure, third country vessels, transshipments and preparation for harvesting of BFT.

The period of October-November was dominated by the continuation of the need to monitor the mandatory closure of the swordfish fishery, and administrative preparations for the commencement of harvest activity in the BFT farms.

General Vessel Inspection	110
VMS/Port Inspection/Technical VMS	89
Transshipment	17
Vehicles Inspections	17
Caging Transfers Inspections	43
Farm Equipment Inspections	35
Slipways Observation and Inspections	20
Release of BFT	2
Fishmongers/Cold Stores/Fish Shops - Visits and Inspections	17
Verification of Equipment and Vessels	18
Landings of BFT	66
Follow-ups	3
Infringements/Warnings/Confiscation	15

The staff underwent several days of pre-sea training in order to prepare them for essential RIB operations in 2010.

There are still some aspects of the work of fisheries protection officers which need to be developed. Seagoing operations are highly essential to detect and eliminate illegal activity in the inshore areas, and this training will be undertaken upon delivery of the RIB. The competence of the fisheries protection officers also needs to be developed with regard to the inspection of trawlers. However, before that can be tackled, stakeholders must be given the opportunity to change gear so that the technical characteristics of trawl gear are in compliance with the applicable legislation. The Fisheries Protection Officers also need to be fully trained in the use of the now mandatory 'Omega' mesh gauge – two of which are on order from the supplier.

Auxiliary Staff

- Landing Officers: three officers on contract basis to inspect all landings of Swordfish, Bluefin Tuna and Trawled fish;
- Observers: Five observers on board – 100% of all harvest of BFT and five caging observers – 100% of all transfers and caging of BFT;
- Health and Safety: The H&S information officer is on loan from IPSL on a definite contract. A regulation booklet regarding prevention and security for fisherman was distributed both to the Fisheries Protection Officers and to fishermen. The Officer in charge performed 38 inspections on vessels registered as MFA.

Bluefin Tuna Obligations and Procedures

Obligations for Vessels fishing for Bluefin Tuna

An individual licence was issued to each active fishing vessel. Each of these vessels has to abide by the following obligations:

- The fishing vessels has to be registered by Malta in the ICCAT record of authorised catching vessels fishing actively for bluefin tuna.
- These vessels have to follow the closed fishing seasons as stated in ICCAT Recommendation 05/08 and further restrictions imposed by the Fisheries Control Department.
- Landings of bluefin tuna can only take place in a designated port after pre-notification by telephone or fax.
- All vessels over 24m have an observer onboard. 3 vessels over 15m have been identified and also have an observer on board to cover our obligations of 20% observer coverage of long liners over 15mt.
- VMS were installed on all vessels over 12m and transmit in real time to our local operator who then forwards the data to the European Commission and to the CFCA.

List of Operational Farms

- Ta' Mattew FishFarm
- Malta Fish Farming
- Fish & Fish Ltd
- Mareblun(Deepsea Ltd)
- AJD Ltd (Comino & St Paul's Bay)

Bluefin Tuna Farms General Information

Transfers and Caging	43
Number of Cages	32
Flag States	Morocco Libya Italy France Malta Spain Korea
Tonnage in 2009	4,831,090 Kgs
Carry over from 2008	744,195 Kgs
Total farmed in 2009	5,308,285 Kgs

Transhipments

ID	Year of Caging	Date	BFT Origin	Destination	Weight (T)	Presentation
T1	2007	05/12/2009	CROATIA	JAPAN	163.24	FIL & DWT
Total					163.24	
T2	2008	02/01/2009	CROATIA	JAPAN	129.06	FIL
					24.44	FIL & LWT
					22.04	FIL & OT
Total					175.54	
T3	2008	04/02/2009	CROATIA	JAPAN	103640	DWT

					163160	FIL
					18820	FIL & OT
Total					285620	
T4	2008	14/02/2009	TURKEY	JAPAN	21	FIL & LWT
					63	LWT
Total					84	
T5	2008	02/03/2009	TURKEY	JAPAN	64	FIL & LWT
					43	FIL
					20	FIL / LWT / OT
Total					127	
T6	UNK	22/10/2009	MOROCCO	JAPAN	14.8	LWT
			MOROCCO	EU	N/A	OT
Total					14.8	
T7	2008	05/11/2009	TURKEY	JAPAN	22.68	FIL & LWT
					21.78	LWT & OT
Total					44.46	
T8	2009	19/12/2009	MALTA	JAPAN	181.74	FIL & LWT
Total					181.74	
T9	2009	22/12/2009	MALTA	JAPAN	83.24	LWT
					0.215	FIL
					8.615	OTHER
Total					92.07	
T10	2009	22/09/2009	LIBYA	KOREA	24.22	GWT
Total					24.22	
T11	2009	25/09/2009	MOROCCO	UNK	27.75	MIXED BFT
Total					27.75	
T12	2009	21/10/2009	TURKEY	JAPAN	123.62	LWT
Total					123.62	
T13	2009	20/12/2009	MALTA	JAPAN	147.46	FIL & LWT
Total					147.46	
T14	2009	22/12/2009	MALTA	JAPAN	83.24	LWT
					0.215	FIL
					8.615	OTHER
Total					92.07	
T15	2009	23/12/2009	MALTA	JAPAN	110.44	MIXED BFT
Total					110.44	
T16	2008 - 2009	20/10/2009	TURKEY	JAPAN	21.22	FIL
					59.28	FIL & LWT
					20	LWT
					22.14	LWT / FIL / OT
					21.2	LWT
Total					143.84	
T17	2008 - 2009	23/10/2009	TURKEY	JAPAN	26.28	FIL & LWT
					26.06	LWT
					24.3	LWT & OT
Total					76.64	
T18	2008 - 2009	10/12/2009	MALTA	JAPAN	45.68	VLWT
					22.24	ULWT
					22.76	LWT
					17.94	LWT / FIL / OT
Total					108.62	
T19	2008 - 2009	11/12/2009	MALTA	JAPAN	18.46	FIL
					38.94	LWT
					17.18	LWT & FIL
Total					74.58	
Grand Total					287459.09	

Harvests

The staff was extensively briefed as to the requirements for both third country vessels and farm operators in the context of various applicable national, international and Community legislative instruments.

BFT 2008 Harvested in 2009	276942kg
BFT 2009 Harvested in 2009	3391671kg
Harvesting Hours	1408.50 Hours
Harvesting group	5 People

Fish Retail Outlets

During the last months, 17 information visits were carried out by teams of Fisheries Protection Officers to all listed fishmongers. During the same visits, the department collected information to update the database.

EU Affairs and Control

This section is in charge of the compilation of required reports such as the Fisheries Control Programme, the Serious Infringement Report and the Annual Report which were sent to the EU before the deadlines in accordance to Council Regulation (EC) No 861/2006 establishing Community financial measures for the implementation of the common fisheries policy and in the area of the Law of the Sea and in accordance to the Commission Regulation (EC) No 391/2007 laying down rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No 861/2006 as regards the expenditure incurred by Member States in implementing the monitoring and control systems applicable to the Common Fisheries Policy.

The duties of this section also include the compilation of Memorandums, Instruction Notes, Briefing Notes and Speaking Notes for the Fisheries Working Party Meetings, the AGRIFISH meetings, the Management Committee Meetings and the Expert Group Meetings which were held in Brussels. The Instruction Notes, Briefing Notes and Speaking Notes are used by the National Expert who attends the meeting.

Additional tasks include the verification and validation of bluefin tuna statistical documents, bluefin tuna catch documents Re-export Certificates and other related documents. All documents should be in accordance to the Council Regulation (EC) No 302/2009 concerning a multiannual recovery plan for bluefin tuna in the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean.

Some other general duties of this section include the filing and storing of all caging and harvesting observer sheets, filing of all transshipment documents, updating BCD database to reflect deduction due to harvests, organising and coordinating seminars and meetings and attend meetings abroad.

Meetings Attended

Number of Meetings	Organised by
48	EU
6	CFCA
3	GFCM
4	ICCAT

Training

Training Sessions	Organised by	Number of days
1	JDP Milazzo – Malta	5
1	JDP Espagna – Malta	4
1	Workshop	4
1	IUU Training Course by CFCA	3

Participation in International Groups

During 2009, officers from the Capture Fisheries Section (MCFS) participated in various international planning and working groups and scientific projects. Some of these were partially funded by the EC.

Number of Meetings	Meetings in connection with
7	National Data Collection Programme
7	EU Scientific and Technical Economic Committee on Fisheries (STECF)
1	International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT)
7	General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM)
7	Other meetings

Joint Deployment Programmes

Due to the implementation of the Bluefin Tuna Recovery Plan, a JDP was set up to ensure operational coordination of joint control, inspection and surveillance activities by Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal and Spain and to give effect to the criteria, benchmarks, common inspection tasks and procedures and, in particular, the ICCAT Scheme of Joint International.

Under the JDP 2009, several inspections ashore, in port and in farms were carried out. Malta took part in eight days of sea patrols and 18 flights of air surveillance, all in conjunction with the Armed Forces of Malta.

During these missions, in order to ensure the effectiveness of inspections ashore, in port and of farms and traps, mixed teams of inspectors including National Fisheries Inspectors from other participating Member States were associated as follows:

JDP	Number of Days
Malta – France	15 – 19 June 2009
Malta – Italy	18 - 22 May 2009
Malta – Greece	13 – 17 July 2009
Malta – France	05 – 09 October 2009
Malta – Italy	16 – 20 November 2009

Fisheries Board

During the month of July, the Fisheries Board was set up again after a period of three years. It met on a regular basis – four meetings were held in 2009. The main aim of the board is to advise the minister on any matter related to the development, administration and conservation of the fisheries of Malta. Proposals for making regulations and the introduction of measures prohibiting or restricting the catching of species were discussed.

Fishing Vessel Register

The number of fishing vessels registered in the Maltese Fishing Vessel Register (FVR) as at the end of December 2009 was of 2,945 vessels, of which 13.75% were full-time professional (MFA), 23.97% part-time professional (MFB) vessels and 61.26% recreational vessels (MFC). The category of auxiliary vessels (work boats) used in fishing operations (MFD) was made up of 30 vessels.

The total gross tonnage (GT) and power [main engine only] according to FIDES – FRONT sent on 1 December 2009 for the full-time and part-time professional vessels were 10,519.62 GT and 51,486.23kW respectively.

Adjustment of ceiling in the European Fleet Register:

In 2008 an extension from the Commission was granted to Malta in order to finalise the pending issues of the Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance. By the end of the second quarter of 2009, calls for fleet modernisation and adjustment for fishing effort were re-launched, evaluated, implemented and concluded. Four fishing vessels have stopped their fishing activities and their fishing effort through adjustment of fishing effort aid scheme. These fishing vessels benefited from about €377,437 while 48.27 Gross Tonnage was deleted from the Fishing Fleet Register.

Opening of the Professional part of the Fishing Vessel Register:

The Fishing Vessel Register did not open for the professional categories during 2009. However, a number of vessels accepted in the last opening i.e. of April 2008 were registered during 2009 due to the fact that not all new vessels were ready/operational by the end of 2008.

Fleet Register Snapshot:

The four annual fleet register snapshots were uploaded on the first working day of March, June, September and December via FIDES – FRONT, in accordance to EC Reg No. 26/2004 on the Community Fishing Fleet Register, were all uploaded in time and a 0% error result was obtained in all cases.

Fisheries Information System

A number of meetings were held in connection with the development of a uniform and holistic Fisheries Information System. A study entitled "ICT Fisheries, Software Development - Requirements Report" was finalised by Malta Information Technology Agency (MITA) officials. This study compiled the requirements of each section, presenting long-term ideas to reach a consolidated system throughout the Division. A number of meetings discussing the way forward on a holistic system were also held at the Fisheries Steering Committee level. In the meantime, two contracts were signed with Datatrak Ltd on the maintenance of the present systems as follows:

- Contract for the provision of services between Datatrak Solutions Ltd and MITA. Contract Reference No 073/08. Valid from 1 December 2008 – 31 May 2009; and
- Amendment No 01 Contract Ref No 073/08 for Software development services between MRRA and Datatrak solutions Ltd. Valid from 1 July 2009 – 31 December 2009.

Harmonisation of vessels under 6m of the Fishing Vessel Register and the Small Ships Register

Meetings continued with MMA on the harmonisation of vessels under 6 metres of the Fishing Vessel Register (FVR) and the Small Ships Register (SSR). These meetings were held with the intention of discussing the views of each entity and to find an agreement on a way forward to start procedures to solve the problem of dual registries for vessels under 6 metres; namely the Small Ships Register (SSR) of the Malta Maritime Authority (MMA) and the Fishing Vessel Register (FVR) of the VRFCC.

It was proposed to provide a single registry for all types of vessels and that the VRFCCD provide a Fisheries Licence, only as and when a fishing activity is required. Thus MMA will be responsible for the registration of all small ships whilst the VRFCCD will be responsible for the fishing licence. These meetings came to a halt for a number of months due to fact the MMA was undergoing a massive restructuring. The first meeting to restart the procedure was held in December 2009. It was agreed that the way forward was to sign a Memo of Understanding between the two entities and prepare a joint Cabinet Memo with changes in both legislations.

Other issues related to fishing vessel register:

Two Standard Office Procedures (SOPs) on the registration of vessels in the FVR namely one for the registration of professional vessels and the other for the registration of recreational or auxiliary vessels came into force in 2009.

Fisheries Control Specific targets

- *Organise, manage and coordinate the Fisheries Control Group:* Weekly coordination group meetings were held in order to discuss any ongoing issues and problems that may have been encountered. The members of the Fisheries Control Group attended training courses so as to develop their knowledge in the field.
- *Maintain full compliance with regulations, recommendations and resolutions of RFMO's and the EU Commission:* This task was achieved by ensuring that all meetings which involved discussions on new regulations and compliance were covered by a Maltese expert. These meetings were mainly covered by the Director especially with regard to the Bluefin Tuna Recovery Plan and the IUU Regulation. Manage the development of an Information System to collate all the databases that are required in fisheries together with the development of the necessary cross checks: This task was achieved by the setting up of a Steering Committee to plan and direct the implementation and management of the technical solutions as well as identify any funding possibilities. During 2009 several committee meetings were held in order to solve several pending problems.
- *Set up permanent liaison with all relevant authorities to put in place all check and surveillance necessary to comply with all Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) obligations:* led to the drafting of an *IUU Regulation* due to come into force on 1 January 2010.
- *Upgrade the local legislative framework to adapt the legal basis in line with ongoing changes in conservation and control issues:* During 2009, discussions and proposals were made to amend Subsidiary Legislation 425.07. These amendments will effect changes in fees, inclusion of sport and recreational fishing, the safety equipment schedule and the satellite monitoring system.

NATIONAL DATA COLLECTION PROGRAMME

Malta has an obligation to conduct an annual National Fisheries Data Collection Programme (NFDCP). This scientific programme, under the responsibility of the Capture Fisheries Section, is in line with the European Union Fisheries Data Collection Framework (DCF) EC1639/2001 and EC1581/2004, amended by Council Regulation EC199/2008 followed by the Commission Decision EC949/2008. It began in January 2005 with an annual budget of around €500,000 (50% funded by the EC and 50% by Malta). Malta covers the areas of fish capacity and effort, catch and landing statistics, discards, recreational fisheries, catch per unit effort, biological parameters, scientific surveys (MEDITS & MEDIAS) and economics of the fishing fleet, fish processing and aquaculture industries. The programme contributes to a better knowledge of the main fishery resources of Malta from the biological, managerial, economical and social points of view. In this regard, in 2009 the following species were studied in detail: Bluefin Tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*), Swordfish (*Xiphias gladius*), Dolphin Fish (*Coryphaena hippurus*), Mediterranean Spearfish (*Tetrapturus belone*), Common Octopus (*Octopus vulgaris*), Giant Red Shrimp (*Aristaeomorpha foliacea*), Red Shrimp (*Aristeus antennatus*), Pink Shrimp (*Parapenaeus longirostris*), Norway Lobster (*Nephrops norvegicus*), Hake (*Merluccius merluccius*), Red Mullet (*Mullus barbatus*), and Stripped Red Mullet (*Mullus surmuletus*).

Fisheries Monitoring and Research

Fishing Capacities

All Maltese fishing vessels are registered in the Fishing Vessel Register of the Division. The register is kept in a database which forms part of the (MALTASTAT) Information System. This database is

correlated to other databases such as the ones concerning landings. Apart from other information, the Fishing Vessel Register database includes the following information related to each vessel typology, registration number, age of the hull, dimensions: GT, length, width, draught, engine power, type and age, ownership, health and safety equipment.

Based on information supplied in the MALTASTAT system, Malta segmented the fleet of vessels according to the sub division set out in Appendix III (of Regulation EC949/2008), at the requested precision level of the Regulation.

Fishing Effort

Data on effort is available by species, vessel, day, geographic area, and is aggregated as defined in Appendix I of the regulations (duration of trips in fishing days, gear used). Data on fishing effort was aggregated as required in Appendix III, V, VI and VIII of the DCR (EC 949/2008).

Logbook and Sales Voucher Approach

By using information from logbooks, Malta collects data on commercial landings and total catch, including landings (in value and weight) relating to the fleet of vessels over 12 metres. All information on sold fish is registered and stored in the Sales Notes database.

The Sales Notes scheme is also utilised to obtain data on landings in weight and value and estimates of fishing effort for vessels over and less than 10 metres.

Small Scale Fishery (<10 m) Port Sampling Approach

A specific sample survey is carried out to estimate effort and landings relating to artisanal fishery, <10 metre fleet. Data is collected to estimate overall annual commercial landings by species. Landings by weight and value are estimated also by segment, by species, by quarter, and geographical origin of the catch.

With respect to the small scale fishery, around 1,000 interviews were conducted during 2009. Owing to the low number of landings per day, it was decided that all fishers who landed during the sampled days in the sampled ports would be interviewed. The following table shows the number of interviews per quarter, and the number of days sampled.

Small Scale Fishery: Total number of interviews, days and ports per quarter			
Quarters	Interviews	Days	Ports
1 st	89	59	6
2 nd	387	65	6
3 rd	262	69	6
4 th	232	63	6
2009	970	256	6

Catches and Landings

Data on commercial landings is available by species, vessel, day, geographical area, and gear employed.

During 2009, about 17,194 records on commercial landings were recorded and about 1,100 tonnes of fish were landed. The most landed species in terms of weight were *Coryphaena hippurus* (25%), *Thunnus thynnus* (24%), *Xiphias gladius* (17%), and *Scomber* spp. (15%). These species together constitute about 81% of the total landed catch in 2009. The following table summarises the percentage distribution of landings through sales vouchers of the most important species.

Landed catch at the Valletta fish market through sales voucher data			
Species	Scientific name	Weight (t)	%

Lampuki	<i>Coryphaena hippurus</i>	277.96	24.92
Tonn	<i>Thunnus thynnus</i>	262.74	23.55
Pixxispad	<i>Xiphias gladius</i>	192.53	17.26
Kavalli	<i>Scomber spp.</i>	172.30	15.44
Gambli	<i>Natantia spp.</i>	30.49	2.73
Siċċ	<i>Sepia officinalis</i>	15.42	1.38
Mazzola	<i>Squalus spp</i>	14.61	1.31
Qarnit	<i>Octopus spp</i>	11.49	1.03
Fanfri	<i>Naucrates ductor</i>	9.61	0.86
Vopi	<i>Boops boops</i>	9.56	0.86
Other	<i>Osteichthyes</i>	118.89	10.66
Total		1,115.61	100.00

Catch per Unit Effort (CPUE)

The CPUE time series as kg per day of fishing for large pelagics is shown below:

CPUE series for the Maltese reference fleets						
Species	Area	Reference fleet	CPUE (kg/day)			
			2005	2006	2007	2008
<i>Coryphaena hippurus</i>	GSA 15	FAD Fishery	487	515	288	220
<i>Thunnus thynnus</i>	GSA 15	Drifting longlines	450	377	277	238
<i>Xiphias gladius</i>	GSA 15	Drifting longlines	133	111	240	119

Malta also calculates effort data by number of hooks per day. Below is a table showing the CPUE in 1000 hooks/day:

CPUE series for the Maltese reference fleets as Kg/1000hooks/day						
Species	Area	Reference fleet	CPUE (kg/1000hooks/day)			
			2005	2006	2007	2008
<i>Thunnus thynnus</i>	GSA 15	Drifting longlines	750	628	462	397
<i>Xiphias gladius</i>	GSA 15	Drifting longlines	222	185	400	198

MEDITS Trawl Survey

As part of the Mediterranean International Bottom Trawl Survey (MEDITS), an annual summer sampling survey is carried out in the Geographical Sub-Area 15 (GSA15) which includes the Maltese 25 Nautical Mile Fisheries Management Zone. This survey is performed in order to collect data on abundance and biological aspects of 38 species of the priority MEDITS list, including bony fish, cartilaginous fish, crustaceans and cephalopods. The vessel used was the Italian commercial fishing trawler *Sant'Anna* (LOA 33m; engine power 1357 kW) (MEDITS Instruction manual Version 5, April 2007).

Sampling was performed at the 45 selected stations using the MEDITS standard gear at a depth ranging from 45 - 800 m.

From each haul, the catch was sorted into the MEDITS reference species, the fish by-catch and the invertebrate by-catch. The invertebrate by-catch was also retained for further analysis. A minimum of 50 individuals from each of the 38 MEDITS reference species from each station were retained. The biological parameters collected include total length, weight, sex and maturity stage. Both haul registration and processing of biological samples were accurately performed according to the MEDITS protocol.

Number of individuals measured for length, weight, sex and maturity during the MEDITS survey		
Taxonomic Group	No. Length/Weight Measurements	No. Sex/Maturity Measurements
Teleosts	2208	1965
Crustaceans	2917	2313
Selachians	2303	2302
Cephalopods	591	587

All MEDITS data collected was inputted, checked and validated using ATrIS software. The ATrIS (AdriaMed Trawl Information System) software produces the necessary outputs (TA, TB and TC MEDITS files) that are sent and stored in the Regional MEDITS database.

In order to maximise the survey, apart from MEDITS parameters defined by the protocol, all cephalopods caught (not only MEDITS target species) were retained to be able to carry our research on the different species caught, all *Plesionika* spp. specimens were retained for the collection of their biological parameters and all undamaged thornback rays (*Raja clavata*) caught were tagged alive and returned to sea. Moreover, in all hauls a miniature data logger (MINILOG-TD), recording both temperature and depth was mounted on the head rope of the gear.

MEDIAS Acoustic Survey

The inter-disciplinary group of Oceanography of the IAMC- CNR section of Mazara del Vallo, in collaboration with the Department of fishing technology of the ISMAR, section on marine fisheries of the CNR in Ancona, conducted research surveys for the assessment of the spatial distribution and abundance of small pelagic fish in the Strait of Sicily, with the Collaboration of the Malta Centre for Fisheries Sciences in accordance with the MEDIAS protocol. In 2009 this was conducted on board RV *G Dalla Porta* in August

During the research survey:

- acoustic measurements of small pelagic fish stock with a multi-frequency scientific echo-sounder were carried out;
- biological sampling of small pelagic fish using a pelagic trawl equipped with an acoustic system, for the control of the gear horizontal opening during the fishing operations;
- measurement of physio-chemical parameters of the water column.

Sampling of Stock Related Variables (length, weight, age, sex maturity)

For the year 2009 Malta collected biological data on a number of species as listed in table below.

No of measurements conducted per species or group of species in 2009					
Species name	Number of samples for:				
	Length	Weight	Sex	Maturity stage	Age
<i>Aristaeomorpha foliacea</i>	2946	2496	1992	1992	n/a
<i>Aristeus antennatus</i>	294	292	287	287	n/a
<i>Parapenaeus longirostris</i>	4113	3799	3104	3104	n/a
<i>Nephrops norvegicus</i>	1053	551	744	744	n/a
<i>Mullus surmuletus</i>	253	223	223	223	n/a
<i>Mullus barbatus</i>	131	131	131	131	n/a
<i>Merluccius merluccius</i>	1462	737	10	10	n/a
<i>Octopus vulgaris</i>	235	235	235	235	n/a
Other cephalopods	1038	1038	1038	1038	n/a
Rays	395	270	270	256	n/a
Demersal sharks	1069	453	548	8	n/a
Pelagic sharks	223	14	213	0	n/a
<i>Thunnus thynnus</i> (SLL)	543	0	192	0	n/a
<i>Thunnus thynnus</i> (Farms)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
<i>Xiphias gladius</i>	2054	2054	12	12	13
<i>Coryphaena hippurus</i>	1260	1260	508	496	435
<i>Tetrapturus belone</i>	37	37	35	35	n/a

The species were sampled from the market and/or on board vessels by field recorders. The number of trips conducted onboard fishing vessels and at the market is shown below.

No of trips conducted in 2009 onboard fishing vessels and at the market			
Fishing metier	Sampling trip	No. of trips	No. of sampling operations
Bottom otter trawl	Onboard fishing vessels	8	24
Drifting longlines	Onboard fishing vessels	25	n/a
Lampara nets	Onboard fishing vessels	3	3
Purse seine	Onboard fishing vessels	Every harvesting operation	
Set longlines	market sampling	11	n/a
Concurrent length sampling	market sampling	335	n/a

Length measurements were carried out both in the field and in the laboratory. In 2009 no tuna spines were collected for age reading, and 13 spines of swordfish were extracted for age reading, while for dolphinfish specimens otoliths and scales were extracted.

Malta has also been collecting length data from caged bluefin tuna (BFT) during harvest since 2006, including 2009. The amount of length measurements taken was 8 % of all the tuna harvested, however the data for 2009 is still not available.

Stock Assessments

Fish stock assessments were conducted to determine if stocks are sustainably exploited or not. Data was derived from the sampling activities described in the previous sections. The biological reference points used were F0.1, and Fmax. The species assessed in 2009 were Red mullet (*Mullus barbatus*), Striped Red Mullet (*Mullus surmuletus*), Giant Red shrimp (*Aristaeomorpha foliacea*) and Pink shrimp (*Parapenaeus longirostris*). A summary of the results is shown below. In the case of the stock assessments conducted, three out of four stocks are overexploited.

Results of stock assessments for demersal species conducted by Maltese Scientists						
Maltese Name	English name	Scientific name	Stock Status	Current F	F 0.1	F max
Trilja tal-hama	Red Mullet	<i>M. barbatus</i>	Overexploited	0.51	0.35	0.63
Trilja tal-Qawwi	Striped Red Mullet	<i>M. surmuletus</i>	Fully exploited	0.32	0.33	0.60
Gambli homor	Giant Red Shrimp	<i>A. foliacea</i>	Overexploited	0.78	0.35	0.60
Gambli Bojod	Pink Shrimp	<i>P. longirostris</i>	Overexploited	1.05	0.8	1.4

Stock assessments were also conducted for Bluefin tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*) and swordfish (*Xiphias gladius*) but these were conducted in the framework of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT). Malta supplied data on these stocks and the assessments were conducted by ICCAT scientists.

Results of stock assessments for large pelagic species conducted by ICCAT Scientists						
Maltese Name	English name	Scientific name	Stock Status	Current F	F 0.1	F max
Tonn	Bluefin tuna	<i>T. thynnus</i>	Overexploited	25,760 t	8,500 t	15,000 t
Pixxispad	Swordfish	<i>X. gladius</i>	Overexploited	14,227 t	3,174 t	5,035 t

Both of these species are also considered as overexploited.

In summary, out of six species exploited by Maltese fishermen, five are overfished (>80%).

Economic Data for the Fishing Fleet, Fish Processing and Aquaculture Sector

Economic variables were collected for all vessels i.e. both active and inactive. The sampling frame for the collection of economic data was based on the Maltese fishing vessel register information as at 1 January of the reference year, in this case 2008.

The survey for the years 2009-2010 was carried out again as in previous years on a stratified random sampling plan. This technique was used for all variables except for gross value of landings, value of landings per species and average price per species. Direct interviews based on questionnaires were used to gather the data needed.

This annual survey was conducted to cover all the parameters mentioned in Appendix VI (of the Commission Decision EC 949/2008), according to segmentation as set out in Appendix III. The final validated data will be available in January of the 2010.

For the fish processing industry, economic variables were collected for all fish processing companies by census. Direct interviews based on questionnaires were used to gather the data needed.

For the aquaculture industry economic variables were collected for all fish farms by census. Direct interviews based on questionnaires were used to gather the data needed.

No of interviews conducted to collect data on the economic situation of the fishing industry		
Survey	No of interviews conducted	Survey design
Fishing fleet	348	Random Stratified sampling
Fish processing	10	Census
Aquaculture	5	Census

Research Projects

MEDSUDMED (FAO Sub-Regional project - Assessment and Monitoring of the Fishery Resources and the Ecosystems in the Straits of Sicily)

A Pilot Study in the Maltese waters under this project has been completed and is in the process of publication. (website: <http://www.faomedsudmed.org/>)

COPEMED II

The Project CopeMed II is based on the results obtained in the first CopeMed, and as such aims to reinforce scientific co-operation at sub-regional level. The long term objective of the project is environmental, economic and social sustainable management of the fishing activity that properly takes into account the biological aspects, of the marine fishing and its ecosystem. (website: <http://www.faocopedmed.org/>)

Yelkouan Shearwater (EU-LIFE project)

The Yelkouan Shearwater Project is important because the Maltese Islands are home to approximately 10% of the world's population of Yelkouan Shearwaters (*Puffinus yelkouan*). The main aim of the project is to protect the birds at the largest breeding site, Rdum tal-Madonna, in the North of Malta. At a national level, it is aimed to increase breeding pairs by the end of the project in 2010 and to set an example for the management of other protected sites in Malta. The project is 50% funded by the EU Life Nature Fund. MEPA and HSBC are also supporting the project with financial contributions. (website: <http://www.lifeshhearwaterproject.org.mt/en/index.aspx>)

GAP Project (EU FP7 - Bridging the GAP between Science and Stakeholders)

GAP1 initiated by making plans to combine knowledge in future participatory research. Scientists and fishermen engaged through a series of European and regional workshops. GAP1 represents phase 1 of a three-phase programme. It aims to foster the mutual respect between scientists and stakeholders that are essential for successful future collaboration. (website: <http://www.gap1.eu/>)

MESMA Project (EU FP7 - Monitoring and Evaluation of Spatially Managed Areas)

The seas around Europe are home to an exceptionally wide range of marine habitats and their associated biodiversity, whilst also supporting a variety of marine industries. Multiple users can lead to increasing challenges for marine environment managers, such as conflicts between users, or between economic interest and conservation requirements, and there is a greater potential for degradation of the marine ecosystems. Malta participates in this project:

Data Submissions

In 2009 Malta submitted data collected within the framework of the EU DCF to the following international bodies:

- Joint Research Centre (JRC) of the European Commission
 - Formal request for economic data,
 - Call for landings, catches, length and age compositions, effort and trawl surveys in the Mediterranean
 - Call for capacity, landings, effort and economic data,
- International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT)
 - Form I fleet characterisation
 - Task I nominal catch estimates
 - Task II catch and effort statistics
 - Task II size sampling
 - Task II catch at size estimates
- General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM)
 - Dolphinfish annual reporting form
 - Task I statistical matrix

Education, Exhibitions and Marine Life Conservation

Educational Visits at MCFS

There was a surge in demand for group visits from schools, cultural groups and the general public, resulting in an increase of 83% in visitors on last year's total. Groups of German students arrived on a regular basis, while the Junior College sent students working on their Systems of Knowledge projects.

Guided tours for school children from years 4 and 5 primary grades were held on Tuesdays and Thursdays, whilst the permanent exhibition was open for viewing by the general public on Saturdays. The breakdown of the visits by category was as follows: primary school students (851); secondary school students (87); foreign students (337); other groups (235); general public (567).

Exhibition Stands

- The section manned stands at the Science and Technology festival and the Aquaria fair at Razzett tal-hbiberija, Marsascula in November. On both occasions, staff from the Education and the Capture fisheries sections delivered presentations illustrating the scientific and educational work carried out at San Luċjan.
- The section also manned stands at the Tuna Fair at Marsaxlokk and the Lampuki fair at St Julians in June and October respectively.

Educational Material, Media Productions, etc

- Two brochures, one about the Recreational fishing regulations and the other about Fisheries Science, were produced.
- An officer participated in nine issues of the TV series *Mr Fisherman* and the same officer had a live interview on Favourite Channel.

- An officer gave talks entitled: *Life under the sea at Marsascula Primary school; Spawning and rearing the cuttlefish S.officinalis at the Aquaria fair; and The Science of aquarium management at the Science and Technology festival.*

Breeding Trials for Display

In May, the section managed to spawn the Cuttlefish *Sepia officinalis*, using a single female. Out of 240 eggs, 180 were reared for 20 days, but had to be released into the wild due to shortage of collected live food. Eight of the remaining paralarvae were kept and grown on using collected amphipods and cultured live Palaemon shrimp larvae as food. They are now sub-adults, and two are on display.

Meetings Attended

- The section was invited by the French embassy to meet the TARA Expedition team at MCST Bighi.
- Two officers attended the SPA/IBA conference in Valletta, organised by Birdlife Malta.

Aquaculture Water Quality Monitoring Programme

For the year 2009, contracts were made to conduct the aquaculture water quality monitoring programme as approved by the Malta Environment and Planning Authority (MEPA) with three aquaculture operators.

Students

- An MSc student from the University of Malta, conducting her dissertation entitled *Aspects of the Ecology of three demersal elasmobranches, Scyliorhinus canicula, Galeus melastomus and Raja clavata in the Central Mediterranean;*
- An MPhil/PhD student from the University of Malta, conducted part of her dissertation entitled *Biology, population dynamics and ecology of deep water cephalopods in the Maltese Islands;*
- A BSc student from the University of Malta, conducted part of his dissertation entitled *Taxonomic catalogue of cephalopod beaks for identification purposes;*
- A BSc student from the University of Malta, conducted part of his dissertation entitled *Characterisation and impacts of the 'gangmu' fishery in Malta;*
- A MSc student from the University of London U.K. conducted a thesis entitled *Use of VMS data to map trawling effort;*
- Five visiting BSc students from the University of Malta for three months.

DR ANDREINA FENECH FARRUGIA
 Director (Fisheries Control)

Rural Development and Aquaculture Division

Department of Agriculture

ST VINCENT DE PAULE NURSERY

Sale of Fruit Trees and Rootstock

The year's most important event – the sale of fruit trees and rootstock, was delayed because of heavy rainfall till the end of February. A total of 4,730 fruit trees, 7,398 fruit tree rootstock and 4,145 American vine rootstock were sold with sales amounting €27,827.25. The majority of fruit trees with the exception of Chinese jujube, kaki and cherries were grafted and grown on nursery grounds.

The annual sale of olive trees, table grapes and other fruit trees in pots was held during the last two weeks of October. In all, 1,305 olive trees, 347 table grapes, and 535 fruit trees were sold for an income of €15,161.00. During the same period bookings for fruit trees totalling 331 applications were also accepted.

Work and projects

During 2009, a total of 16,400 fruit tree rootstock, 10,000 American vine rootstock cuttings, and 5,900 fruit tree cuttings were planted out, while 7,000 olive rootstocks grown from seed were grafted with several popular table, dual and oil varieties. Of these olive rootstocks 3,500 were grafted with the 'Tal-Bidni' and other Maltese varieties. At the end of the year, 1,550 olive trees of the 'Tal-Bidni' variety were transferred for distributed as part of Project Primo. Samples from ten different Maltese varieties were also collected from different locations and grafted to eventually establish a collection of local olive varieties.

Steps were also taken to re-establish the demonstration orchard in a new location on nursery grounds. The original demonstration orchard is now ten years old and needs replacement. A total of 530 soft-stone varieties such as peaches, nectarines, apricots, plums and prunes were grafted either on GF677 or M29c rootstock grown in pots, and placed under protection in the greenhouse.

In view of the continued expansion of nursery activity, and the necessity to place potted and uprooted fruit trees in a secure holding area, the boundary fence was extended to enclose the greenhouse. Two openings were left in the boundary fence and two large gates erected in place to allow access to the surrounding fields.

New machinery

Another initiative taken this year was the procurement of new farm machinery to replace existing old and worn down machinery. Among the machinery procured were a 26HP Kubota tractor with front loader, a rotary tiller, a multi-tined plough and a heavy duty mower.

RECYCLED WATER DISTRIBUTION UNIT/ŽABBAR

During 2009 the five large open reservoirs which are located at *Tumbrell Xghajra, San Anard, Bidni L/O Žabbar, Habel l-Abjad L/O Žejtun and Tas-Silġ L/O Dellimara* distributed recycled water to farmers who irrigate fields situated in these areas.

This unit carried out cleaning and weeding in the areas surrounding the reservoirs and carried out repairs of a total of 115 water channels, 34 stone inspection chambers, 30 stone pillars and 25 new PVC drain pipes. *Żejtun* reservoir was cleaned from accumulated debris and silt. Concrete was laid on the grounds near *Bidni*, *San Anard* and *Tumbrell* reservoirs and 110 metres double course stone wall and 85 metres rubble wall were constructed near *San Anard* reservoir.

Two applications were submitted at the Water Services Corporation for the installation of water and electricity supply for *San Anard* and *Tumbrell* reservoirs.

In December, vandals damaged 61 metres of water channels near *Bidni* reservoir and a report was lodged at the *Żabbar* Police Station. The Principal Agricultural Foreman in charge of this unit also carries out inspections in connection with permits for pruning and uprooting protected trees according to MEPA legislations. During 2009, he carried out a total of 135 inspections in Malta and Gozo. He also carried out 12 site inspections on private gardens.

SAN ANTON PRESIDENT'S GARDENS AND VERDALA

San Anton President's Gardens and Verdala make up about 80 tumoli of arable land comprising 10 tumoli of citrus trees, stone fruit trees and vines; 6 tumoli for the cultivation of the kitchen garden, 5 tumoli for the cultivation of flowers, 3 tumoli for lawn garden. The other 6 tumoli flower gardens and 50 tumoli consist of decorative trees at Verdala Buskett.

During the year, potatoes, onions cauliflowers, cabbages, greenhouse tomatoes and other seasonal vegetables were cultivated in six tumoli of land situated at the kitchen garden. Carnations, Liliun and Gerbera were planted in the greenhouse at the flowers section. The greenhouse formerly planted with tomatoes was provided with new polythene to accommodate seasonal flowers. The turf was regularly irrigated and sprayed. Soil at the citrus section was rotovated. Orange trees were pruned and sprayed. Some protective dead trees at Verdala were uprooted after permission was obtained from MEPA authorities. Occasionally the gardens were prepared for state visits by foreign presidents. The palace, chapel and courtyards were decorated with pot plants and flowers for the occasion of Mother's Day and Father's Day. Another occasion was the feast of Our Lady of the Pillar. Many decorations with poinsettias, Christmas vetch and flowers were displayed as the large courtyard normally used for the parking area was transformed into a chapel where Christmas Mass was transmitted on local television.

During the year the section was further equipped with new machinery such as a mini transporter, grass cutter, hedge cutter and also a new greenhouse measuring 6.5metres by 20 metres.

APICULTURE SECTION

The Apiculture Unit keeps a number of colonies in the Government Apiaries at Ghammieri, and at Romeo Romano Garden St Venera. The aim of the Apiculture Unit is to assist beekeepers on the rearing of bees. Special attention is given to beginners. The Government's Apiaries require several works which are carried out by the same officials; this involves feeding, treating for varroa mite, reproduction of nuclei, and general maintenance of hives, observation area and the landscape around etc. The officials of the Unit usually prove their techniques by demonstrations carried out at the Government's Apiary and on site. The Unit caters for assistance where diseases might occur. Several groups of students, elderly, media, and others visited the observation area.

The Unit participated in various radio programmes and articles. In November it organised the Honey Fair which was again a great success.

It is the Unit's responsibility to register new beekeepers and update data on presently registered beekeepers. Such data includes Name, address, address of the apiary, number of colonies, type of hives, experience, annual honey harvest and the overall condition of the apiary. As of November 2009, the

officials of the Unit began visiting Gozo once every two weeks in order to inspect the apiaries and update registrations.

Another role is to produce bee queens having Maltese character and present them for sale at a subsidised price to beekeepers. In the last two months, the Unit was preparing to increase the number of bee queens for sale during 2010. Lately discussions were carried out to prepare for analysis of the Maltese bee and to control the selling of honey.

VITICULTURE AND OENOLOGY UNIT

- *Administrative work:* During 2009, the Viticulture and Oenology Unit carried out administrative work in the registration of wineries, vines and the modification of the production potential, filling of the harvest declarations as well as the registration of vines under the schemes of the DOK and IGT for those not yet registered.
- *Certification system:* Seven different wines of vintage 2007 and seventy one wines of vintage 2008 coming from different wineries, were certified as DOK, while another eight wines of vintage 2007 and thirty one wines of vintage 2008 were certified as IGT. For the period between the 15 November 2008 and 15 October 2009, this certification system cost more than €40,000 which were paid by the Ministry.

During the grape harvest, Unit officials were present for the delivery of grapes by farmers at the wineries. Sample grapes were taken to be checked and results of the sugar level were verified on site. Any disputes raised regarding sugar level were solved on site or after months of vinification. The results which were obtained were compiled into a database to be used for administrative controls during the certification of the 2009 wines. Data started to be processed after the farmers forwarded their harvest declarations.

The Ministry has come to a contract agreement with the Viticulture Producer Organisation to perform field inspections prior to the grape harvest. These form part of the certification process of the unit which needs to verify the conditions of the vineyards and grapes before being delivered by farmers to the wineries.

The applications for the certification of DOK wines produced in 2009 together with other wines of 2008 and 2007 were received in October. Relevant checks were carried out and wine samples were collected and sent for the relevant analysis.

- *Wine registers:* Wine registers were inspected in order to confirm the whole operation which is necessary for the certification of these wines. Other administrative checks were carried out at the office to confirm the correctness of the data received:
 - cross checking the sugar content of samples gathered during grape harvest;
 - checking whether the land parcels are registered;
 - checking the quota of grapes for each farmer;
 - checking the labeling to be used on the bottles.
- *Wine samples:* Wine samples from the 2008 vintage year were processed in the microvinification winery. Samples were not sent to the European Commission in fulfilment of EU regulations since at the beginning of 2009, the production of samples were no longer under this office's remit.
- *Orange blossom water:* Another traditional product which was managed by this unit was the production of Orange Blossom water. The licence was paid and once again the blossoms of sour oranges started to be distilled with the "Lampik".
- *Subsidies:* During this year, subsidies for year 2007 for additional aid were paid, amounting to €474,000. *Meetings in Brussels:* Officers from this unit started to attend meetings in Brussels and submitting communications required by Commission.
- *Wine Regulations Board:* The Wine Regulations Board only met once to date, due to the changing of the officials who had to be appointed on the board. The technical sub-committee was called three times in order to help more in the sector especially that concerning the certification of wine.

- *Milan fair*: For the first time, officers from this unit visited the *Enovitis Simei* fair in Milan where the latest technologies were exhibited. This fair normally takes place once every two years.

OLEICULTURE UNIT

Drafting of National Legislation

In order to regulate the Olive Sector in Malta, after internal consultations with MRRA officials and legal representatives together with OPM, it was decided that there was the need for a local Act to Regulate the Olive Sector. The Act was drafted and is being vetted by a Legal Advisor in order to be passed on for approval and initial stages for issuing this Act under the Laws of Malta.

Data Reporting

As member of the EU, Malta is automatically also a member of the International Olive Council (IOC). Every member of the IOC is obliged once a year to complete an official questionnaire and forward statistics regarding the production, trade and pricing of olive oil and table olives within their country. Since membership with IOC is through the EU, the IOC questionnaire is also utilised as a means of data reporting to the EU. The necessary data was collected from the National Statistics Office, local olive oil producers, and Pitkali markets, and the completed questionnaire was forwarded to the EU Commission.

Olives and Olive Oil Promotion Campaign (October – December 2009)

In 2009, the International Olive Council issued two calls. The first call regarded the the award of grants for the implementation of promotional and scientific events relating to olive oil and table olives in EU, IOC member countries. For the second call, issued in September 2009, the Oleiculture Unit drafted a proposal for a promotion campaign for olive oil and table olives in Malta for the period of October to December 2009. The main objective of the proposal was to promote olive oil and table olives and expand consumption and awareness of their nutritional and beneficial properties. The activities of the project proposal included informative publications, a seminar, the production of an informative documentary on DVD, media advertising, and participation in related activities. The total budget of the proposal was €14,000 of which the IOC would be financing 50%.

The proposal was approved by MRRA and forwarded to the IOC who accepted the proposal and signed an agreement with this Ministry, stating that a maximum of 50% of the funds indicated for the activities mentioned in the programme will be co-financed by them. On 11 December, a full-day seminar was held at the Radisson Blu Resort, which included presentations from various officials and experts on the benefits of olive oil and olives, a lunch based on olive oil and olives, and an olive tasting session directed by Italian tasting expert, Dr Alfredo Marasciulo. Four private stakeholders also displayed their products during the event. The outcome and response of the seminar was a positive one, with 130 attendees. An informative folder with several leaflets was published, from which an amount was distributed during the seminar, and the remaining will be distributed to the general public. Publicity was also made in four local newspapers and online.

Olive grove at Għammieri

In November the olive trees of the Għammieri experimental grove were harvested partly by hand and partly by a mechanical hand held machine. A total of 104kgs were harvested and were pressed at Ghajn Rasul Ltd. The resulting yield of extra-virgin olive oil was that of 8-10%. Since the previous year, the olive trees were productive however during 2009, the olive grove experienced an ‘off’ year and hence the production was relatively low. The olive oil was stored in a stainless steel tank and will be bottled for sale during related fairs and activities.

Inspections of olive oil production premises

For the purpose of building a control system within the olive oil production industry, the Oleiculture Unit started to inspect the olive oil production premises. One olive mill was inspected, a report was filed and the mill was informed to take corrective action. Inspections of the other operating mills are foreseen during the first quarter of 2010. During communications with olive mills, the Oleiculture Unit continuously keeps records for appropriate data reporting after the harvest season, and traceability during control inspections.

Harvest Declarations

In November a total of 681 harvest declaration forms were sent out to farmers having more than 0,3 tumoli of area under olive trees. The closing date for the submission of this declaration was 15 December. By the end of 2009, a total of 358 submissions were received.

Publications

For the third consecutive year, the Oleiculture Unit participated in the publication of a world guide on extra-virgin olive oil named *L-extravergine – Guida al Migliori oli del mondo di qualita accertata* published by *Le Guide di cucina e Vini*. A write-up on Oleiculture in Malta will be published in the next edition.

Experiments

An experiment aimed at investigating the effects of irrigation water salinity on olive trees was initiated at Ghammieri during the last quarter of 2009. Sixteen trees of the same variety and age were transferred from the SVDP Nursery to Ghammieri. Four sets of four olive trees each will be irrigated with water of four different salinity concentrations and the resulting effects on the trees will be recorded and interpreted. The trees will be kept under shelter in order to avoid disturbance from rain water.

Technical Assistance

Technical assistance was provided for newly operating stakeholders in the olive sector, students carrying out their thesis relating to olives and farmers.

Attendance to meetings held overseas

- *Management Committee Meetings (Brussels)*: An officer attended a meeting about olive oil and table olives held on 9 June under the Management Committee for the Common Organisation of Agricultural Markets. The meeting focused on tenders for granting private storage aid for olive oil in Member States where the olive oil market was seriously disturbed. The issue was followed up in two other committees of the animal products sector, where the representatives present were given instruction notes from the Oleiculture unit to vote in favour of this proposal.
- *International Olive Council (Madrid)*: A number of meetings were attended - Scientific Committee (29 - 30 March); Meeting of Chemists (28 -29 March); Advisory Committee (29 June -1 July); Technical Committee (29 June - 1 July). The meetings discussed world current issues within the olive industry. Among others, technical committees focused on world statistics and trends in consumption and trade and scientific committees focused on new revised analysis methods.
- *Meeting with Ministry for Rural Affairs and Food in Athens (Greece)*: Between 15 and 17 July, an officer from the Oleiculture Unit attended a consultation meeting with Greek officials aimed at developing the local olive sector. The meetings mainly focused on controls within the olive sector.
- *Participation in the Third Olivebioteq symposium held in Sfax (Tunis)*: An officer from the Oleiculture Unit participated in this event held between 15 and 19 December. A poster on the olive sector in Malta

was presented on behalf of the Unit. The event focused mainly on new and advanced techniques in olive growing, and included a technical visit and several workshops.

- *Local Participation:* The officer in charge of the Oleiculture Unit participated in the morning programme *Bongu* on 19 November, where he delivered a talk about the quality and categories of olive oil. Moreover, a write-up was prepared for insertion in an information leaflet distributed during the event of *Żejt iż-Żejtun* held on 26-27 September under the *Naturalment Malti* activities. A stand representing the Oleiculture Unit was set up whereby information and assistance in relation to Oleiculture was offered to the general public.

MALTA EMBELLISHMENT AND LANDSCAPING PROJECT

Last year was the seventh year of the Public Private Partnership between the Government and Environmental Landscapes Consortium Limited. This was the second year under the implementation of the new contract where the Government was in a position to acquire a better service from ELC Ltd. This led to better general maintenance, an increase in the planting of trees that included the replacement of trees that died over the past 20 years, and a better presentation and a larger number of flowering annuals. This was practically possible with the same budget allocation as in previous years regarding maintenance, and which amounts to nearly seven million euro. This included also an increase in the square metres of landscaped area under the maintenance programme, without increasing government expenditure.

Projects

Difficulties encountered in relation to past projects were resolved and the following projects were concluded in 2009:

- Maghtab (current phase)
- Regional Road
- Villa Francia
- San Anton Folklore Museum

Projects in hand include:

- Roundabout near the Sare' Marble, Paola
- Roundabout Ghajn Dwieli, Paola
- Marsascalea By-Pass
- Luqa Road
- Hal Far Road
- San Anton Maze
- Garden Signage
- Qui-si-Sana Gardens

ORGANIC FARMING

Organic farming is an ever increasing healthy trend in the cultivation of produce. Locally the organic industry is still pretty much in its early stages with very few enterprises giving due importance to this market.

To date there are only 12 certified organic producers in Malta & Gozo, working on 17.3 hectares which is equal to 0.17% of the total agricultural land in Malta & Gozo. Of this local organic land, it is estimated that 40% is used for the production of olives; 23% for fruit and berries; 15% for cereal (mostly used for green manure); 12% for vegetables, and 10% for grapes.

The 2007 and 2008 Reports on Organic Farming were sent to the EC. Gathering of data was also sought from the Malta Standards Authority as Malta's Control Authority on Organic Farming.

With effect from October 2009, the officer who was in charge of the organic section, was transferred and the section joined the Viticulture & Oenology Office. A new Competent Authority was re-established in September 2009.

Standing Committee on Organic Farming (SCOF)

All seven SCOF meetings held in Brussels in the course of 2009 were attended.

Experiments in the Government Farm

The cultivation of seven different varieties of strawberries produced 1,050 plantlets. Foliar fertilisation was used in these trials especially when the air temperature dropped under 20°C. Clean mulch is being used to keep fruit off the ground. In the month of November a total of 57 pallets of 250 gr was harvested, of which 15 pallets were sold to an organic outlet and the rest to Ghammieri employees. Twenty different international varieties and two local varieties of olive trees are being cultivated organically for research and experimentation at Ghammieri. This grove contains around 200 olive trees.

Liaison with the Malta Standards Authority

As Malta's Control Authority on Organic Farming, the Malta Standards Authority and this Unit soon developed a close working relationship. Several meetings and discussions were held on various matters.

This office liaised between the MSA and the Department for Rural Development in the issuing of certificates to farmers, ie processors and producers, in conversion to organic farming, to be eligible to apply for the said subsidy. Certification from MSA regarding payments/subsidies was issued on the following criteria: the size of the parcel; type of crop; the conversion status (stating whether area is certified as being under conversion or already certified organic).

In July, a training course was organised by the Malta Standards Authority, with assistance from this Unit, regarding the new Council Regulation 834/2007.

This Unit also held a routine inspection at MSA as part of a regulatory process performed by the Competent Authority.

Malta Organic Farming Movement

Close contacts were established with the Malta Organic Farming Movement which was consulted on a regular basis. The Unit believes that contacts with relevant non-government organisations would reflect on a better understanding of the farmers' needs and views on operative organic farming.

Interest by Schools and Students in Organic Farming

This Unit was also of assistance to various students ranging from primary to university level, willing to research on organic farming. Schools expressing their interest in the matter visited the farm. Visits also took place in schools whereby talks were given to students, who in turn exhibited their projects related to organic farming.

CROP HUSBANDRY SECTION

The Crop Husbandry Section is responsible for the setting up of trials and experiments which are performed both in the open field and also under protected cultivation. Vegetables, herbs, flowers, fruit trees and forage crops are cultivated for demonstration purposes. Besides the cultivation of crops this Section looks after the upkeep of the fields and their surroundings.

Outdoor Crops

- After meetings held with KPH, a fodder trial was carried out. Various types of fodders were sown for a comparison trial in fields 40/41 and field 3. Some of the fodder types are the *segale*, *triticale*, oats, wheat, vetch, ryegrass, Egyptian clover and silla. This trial is going to be concluded in late spring 2010 after the harvest.
- During 2009 vegetables such as kohlrabi, zucchini, lettuce, cabbages, onions, broad beans, parsley and other herbs, aubergines, green peppers and potatoes were cultivated in the fields at Ghammieri.
- The Crop Husbandry Section is also in charge and maintains the Citrus Orchards, the Olive Orchard, the Vineyards and the Prickly Pear collection plot.
- The produce of all fodder, such as wheat and silla which was provided to the Animal Husbandry Section, was also sown and harvested by this section.
- Employees carried out maintenance of rubble walls, irrigated crops and orchards, removed weeds and litter from fields, manured the fields and ploughed them.

Protected Cropping

Various crops were grown in greenhouses during 2008. The main crops grown were tomatoes, melons, zucchini, cucumbers and runner beans. 1,000 poinsettias were also grown in greenhouses for embellishment during Christmas. Also, trees grown by school children as gathered by the Arbor Committee were housed and repotted in one of the available greenhouses. Some of these trees were later planted at Ghammieri at the set-aside area (field No4) which is used mainly for school visits and tree planting activities by students. Herbs and other pot plants were also grown in another greenhouse.

After the crops were harvested from the greenhouses, most of the greenhouses were fumigated by solarisation in order to reduce pests, diseases and weeds during the next season. After solarisation, the planting in the greenhouses commenced as required for the next seasons' trials. Mainly each greenhouse was planted with tomatoes for a trial regarding the integrated pest management of *Tuta Absoluta* and other greenhouses with aubergines, green peppers and tomatoes as product trial to minimise the need of fertilisers and pesticides. Another two greenhouses were sown with cucumbers and zucchini mainly for demonstration purposes.

Plants and Produce donations

Date	Plants/Products	Amount	Donated to;
14/01/2009	Native Tree Seedlings	40	Foresta 2000
27/02/2009	Globe Artichokes	100 heads	ITS
28/02/2009	Globe Artichokes	30 heads	ITS
06/03/2009	Seville Orange	8 crates	ITS
17/04/2009	Herbs	100 plants	Charity event at Girgenti
17/04/2009	Hydrangea	53 plants	Charity event at Girgenti
30/04/2009	Globe Artichokes	400 heads	ITS
25/05/2009	Hydrangea	15 plants	Centru Hidma Socjali
18/03/2009	Oleander Plants	30 plants	Civil Protection
05/08/2009	Tevetia Plants	35 plants	Parks
05/08/2009	Duranta Plants	22 plants	Parks
12/08/2009	Oleander Plants	218 plants	Parks
12/10/2009	Bay Laurel	50 plants	For selling at SVDP Nursery
15/10/2009	Carobs	3 sacks	ITS

Pitkali Sales

The following is the selling of vegetables at Pitkali of produce grown at Ghammieri:

Vegetables	Boxes	Total Value (€)
Globe Artichokes	---	2,830.85
Tomatoes	172	1,408.18
Zucchini	253	1,351.54
Kohlrabi	312	1,324.03
Parsley	---	96.41
Basil	---	---
Aubergines	399	2,426.88
Green Pepper	79	120.95
Potatoes	170	691.19
Potato seed	2	2.50
Lettuce	49	91.74
Onions	18	18.00
Onions White	45	185.92
Cabbages	209	696.23
Pumpkin	80	105.15
Strawberry	---	---
Melons	31	170.39
Rucola	125	37.70
Coriander	---	---
Watermelon	39	60.20
Runner Beans	10	149.36
Broad Beans	26	47.08
Cucumbers	28	660.85
Total		€12,475.18

Total Income for the Crop Husbandry Section in 2009

Produce from Pitkali	12,475.18
Potatoes and Other Produce from the Farm	1,373.00
Sales of organic strawberries from the Farm	63.50
Onion Seedlings	2,736.67
Sales from various fairs	836.00
Grand Total	€17,484.35

ANIMAL HUSBANDRY

Poultry Section

During 2009, this section continued with the breeding programmes of various poultry breeds, especially the Black Maltese breed. This breed, which in the past was used a lot by local breeders for egg production, is now being bred to increase its population due to the fact that this was in danger of extinction. Apart from this breed, different types of poultry, like the marans chickens, *Azil*, naked neck, silky, peacocks, guinea fowls, geese, different breeds of ducks, fancy and broiler pigeons are being bred at Ghammieri. The poultry section incorporates in it as well the keeping of ponies used for children pony rides in different events organised by the Ministry, a horse, a donkey, a monkey, llamas, emus, ostriches, pigmy goats and gazelle. Children view them when they visit the farm - it is worth noting that there is no other place on the island where children can go and see these type of animals. Eventually all animals and poultry offsprings are sold to the public.

Sheep section

During the year the Sheep Section continued with its breeding programme with the aim to rear good producing sheep which can be sold to the local breeders to improve their genetics. The majority of the sheep are of the Maltese breed in order to enhance this breed which has good traits in regard to production and acclimatisation to our climatic conditions. All the milk produced in this section is sold to the public.

The demand for this type of milk has increased through the years and at the moment the demand is greater than the supply.

Rabbitry section

The rabbitry section's main aim is to produce rabbits with good traits for breeding and production. This was reached through lots of years of making the right selection. Most of the rabbits are sold to the local public who are mainly small rabbit breeders. With the restricted number of rabbits available at the moment, not all the rabbit breeders' requests can be met as demand is greater than production.

Goat Section

The focus of this Section is the propagation of the Maltese Goat. Goats are selected for their dairy quality with special regard to their hardiness to the Maltese semi arid climate and to their resistance to mastitis. Earlier in 2009 the goat herd at the Government Farm was tested for viral disease, a good number of goats were diagnosed positive. Action was taken to separate positive from negative animals in order to clear out the disease.

Cattle Section

The cattle section at the Government Farm is divided into two sections - the Dairy and the Autochthonous Section. In the Dairy section there is a small dairy herd where production trials are conducted. The focus of the Autochthonous Section is the propagation of the Gendus Malti, a draft bovine that unfortunately has been eradicated almost completely from Malta and Gozo as it was replaced by modern farm machinery. Both the Dairy Section and the Autochthonous Section are appreciated locally and by foreign visitors who visit the farm, especially by Maltese students.

MEPA

As in previous years, officers in the Animal Husbandry Section continued to inspect farms of applicants to upgrade their farms to be in line with present or coming in force legislation. Applicants pass their new applications through this office for approval before submission to MEPA. This section offers advisory service to these farmers and gives them instructions on the required changes in order to upgrade their farms. The majority of cases request to upgrade bovine, caprine, ovine, poultry, pig, sheep, rabbits and equine farms.

Single CMO meetings

These meetings are held in Brussels every month and tackle issues in connection with poultry meat and eggs, pig meat, beef and dairy. Officers from the AH attend these meetings periodically when issues of importance to Malta relating to animal and animal products are discussed. This section and the Veterinary Services prepare instructions notes or explanatory memoranda accordingly.

Media programmes

The aim of such programmes is to educate the farmers and the consumers about animal breeding, presentation of the product and to educate the consumers how to choose the local products.

NOEL AZZOPARDI

Acting Director (Agriculture)

Rural Development and Aquaculture Division

Animal Welfare and Promotion Directorate

The Animal Welfare and Promotion Directorate (AWPD) was established with the purpose of ensuring that the rights of animals are respected and that the laws governing the way animals are treated are respected. The Directorate carries out important functions that include the carrying out of regulatory controls and legislative enforcement from an animal welfare point of view. These controls are carried out at all stages where the welfare of animals is at stake. The areas covered include domestic pet animals, stray animals, food producing species reared on farms, stunning and slaughter practices, transport facilities of animals and animals used for transportation purposes. The AWPD also ensures that all animal sanctuaries operate in line with animal welfare regulations and that the all animals homed within such sanctuaries are taken care of in an appropriate manner that is consonant with animal welfare standards. In addition, the sphere of action of the AWPD is not exclusively limited to the above mentioned areas but other areas, such as animal welfare issues related to importation/transit of live-animals and animal experimentation. The AWPD also coordinates inspections and request input from other competent authorities such as the Animal Health Section within the Fish and Farming Regulation and Control Division, the Administrative Law Enforcement Section within Police, and the CITES section within MEPA. The AWPD is also charged with the responsibility of responding to calls for services and following up reports of ill treatment of animals, capturing and restraining of dangerous animals, and capturing and homing of stray animals. Other responsibilities include putting stray animals in sanctuaries where the animals are provided with proper veterinary treatment and put up for adoption.

Animal Welfare Initiatives

The funds allocated to this directorate were spent on three main projects regarding Animal Welfare:

- the Neutering Campaign;
- the provision of financial help the animal NGO's to cover certain capital expenses, and
- the Animal After-Care Centre.

Other than these projects, the directorate was actively involved in a number of information and promotion campaigns. These initiatives managed to establish a good relationship with the media and effectively managed to reach and appeal to a wide ranging audience. The AWPD also participated in a number of TV programmes which deal with the care of animals and it has contributed to articles on the written media. The reception and feedback by the public was very encouraging.

The directorate allocated two telephone lines, which are being used by the public to report any cases of ill treatment of animals and where any other queries or suggestions may be forwarded. In addition, the AWPD has also a launched a website to promote dissemination of information on animal welfare and to expand its interaction with the public.

The Animal Welfare Department is encouraging animal sanctuaries and also pet owners to make use of the microchip implant.

Neutering Campaign

The scope of the Neutering Campaign is to manage feral cat and dog populations. The most important purpose of the neutering campaign is to prevent unwanted litters of stray animals across the country. This campaign has proved to be successful. During 2009 approximately 420 stray animals (cats and dogs) were

neutered. The success of this campaign was the result of a coordinated effort between the directorate, the Animal NGOs and various veterinarians. The funds allocated to this campaign amounted to approximately €30,000, which covered the expenses of the vets for the actual neutering procedure, including any medicines required and also the expenses which were necessary to keep the cats and dogs housed until they recovered from the surgery. All the funds allocated for this project were used and thus this project was closed successfully.

Funding for animal NGOs

The amount of €65,000 was handed out to several animal NGOs.. All registered animal NGOs were invited to submit projects which were part of their capital expenditure. A board analysed the various applications and, since all of them fit the pre-established criteria, all were accepted. Some of the NGOs have already completed the projects and have received the funds for which they were eligible, others are still to start the preliminary stages of their projects and will receive their funds upon successful completion of their works. Apart from monetary help, the directorate supported NGOs in structural works with regard to renovation and improvement of premises by supplying raw materials and also assistance. The Works Division also provided a wide ranging array of assistance to these NGOs in relation to the upgrading and maintenance needs.

Animal After-Care Centre

The Animal Welfare Directorate completed the planning process for an Animal After-Care Centre and the construction work has almost finished. This centre, which is being built in Ta' Qali, will be open 24 hours a day and will host stray animals which need urgent medical attention. The centre will be fully functional by 2010.

Micro-Chipping

Micro-chipping offers benefits such as returning any lost pets to their owners. Apart from providing a very quick method of identifying and registering animals, micro-chipping has the advantage of being easily administered, is compact and unsightly, and pain-free. In addition micro-chipping has the benefits of being universally accepted, is permanent, is discreet, and a relatively inexpensive way of tagging an animal. In fact this system is already being used by certain animal sanctuaries and its usage is expected to increase and hopefully become a standard within all animal sanctuaries. A total of 365 cats and dogs were micro-chipped during the 2009.

The animal welfare officers are trained and equipped with the necessary equipment to scan microchip number readings on animals.

Promotional Campaigns

Promotional campaigns are continuously being set up by our department in collaboration with some NGOs in order to promote animal welfare and also to educate the public on proper animal care.

Cases and Reports on Animal Cruelty

Approximately 1,800 reports were received from the public by means of telephone (about six daily) in 2009. The majority of people reported mistreated animals and animals held in inappropriate environments causing distress to animals. Some cases were settled on the phone.

There were few cases in which the animals had to be put down due to a degree of diseases which was beyond treatment. In these cases the animals were certified by a veterinary officer in accordance to the Animal Welfare Act. In some cases, the Directorate works in collaboration with the Police and other departments such as the Civil Protection.

Court cases have included cases of mistreatment of animals that lead to mortality and also cases in which farm animals were being slaughtered inhumanely and not in accordance to the Act. All cases were followed up by the Animal Welfare Officers and enforcement actions were carried out in accordance to the Animal Welfare Act.

Number of Inspection Reports

- Cases in which animals were being bred, conditioned or held in use for fighting - 3
- Cases in which animals were being mistreated - 140
- Cases in which animals were being held in inappropriate environments causing continuous distress to animals - 265
- Cases in which animals had to be put down due to aggressiveness or due to diseases that could not be treated - 40
- Complaints which do not fall under the responsibility of our department (such as dogs barking causing nuisance to neighbours) - 110
- Cases regarding management of stray dogs – 230
- Court Cases - 13
- Total number of inspection reports in 2009 was that of 800.

DR MARIO SPITERI

Director (Animal Welfare and Promotion)

Rural Development and Aquaculture Division Wholesale Markets and Fishing Fleets Facilities Directorate

INTRODUCTION

The Wholesale Markets and Fishing Fleet Facilities Directorate is responsible for managing the operations in a smooth and efficient manner of the Civil Abattoir, the Fruit and Vegetable Market, the Fish Market and the Fishing Fleet Facilities.

The Fishing Fleet Facilities consist of the Hard Standing Facility at Marsaxlokk, and Fishing Ports and Slipways located all around the Maltese coastal areas.

During 2009, the Directorate continued with its activities to contribute to the economically viable development of the agriculture and fishing industry through administration, control and supervision of the surrounding environment and through the employment of veterinary, agriculture fisheries and administrative knowledge, skills and resources in a cost effective and within the various sectors' social perspectives.

SLAUGHTERING OF LIVESTOCK

The number and weight of livestock slaughtered in 2009 at the Civil Abattoir in Malta are as indicated in the tables below:

Animals Slaughtered (Heads)						
Cattle	Swine	Sheep	Lamb	Goats	Kids	Equines
6,047	90,140	1,612	41	695	4	62

Animals Slaughtered (Weight/Kgs)						
Cattle	Swine	Sheep	Lamb	Goats	Kids	Equines
1,543,174	7,368,645	37,793	243	10,821	29	11,835

Slaughter Analysis: 2008 - 2009

There was a decrease in the number of total animals slaughtered as compared to 2008. The number of slaughtered animals in 2008 totalled 107,923 whilst in 2009 it was 98,601.

While an increase of 11% was registered in the number of cattle slaughtered, there were decreases of 94% in the number of kids slaughtered with respect to 2008, followed by a 55% and 12% decrease in slaughtered equines and swine respectively. There was also a considerable increase in the number of slaughtered goats, sheep and lambs, amounting to an increase of 4,633%, 1,269% and 205% respectively in 2009 over 2008. A detailed analysis is presented in the following table:

2008 : 2009 Animal Heads and Slaughter Analysis								
Year	Cattle	Swine	Sheep	Lamb	Goats	Kids	Equines	Total
2008	5,453	102,104	127	20	15	65	139	107,923
2009	6,047	90,140	1,612	41	695	4	62	98,601
% Change	11	-12	1,269	205	4,633	-94	-55	-9

The total weight of animals slaughtered in 2009 amounted to 8,972,540 kg while the quantity for 2008 was 10,011,798 kgs. This resulted in a decrease of 10 % in weight in relation to last year. The increase in weight of bovines was 4%, whilst there was a significant decrease of 13% weight for swine.

Animal Weight (kg) Slaughter Analysis								
Year	Cattle	Swine	Sheep	Lamb	Goats	Kids	Equines	Total
2008	1,480,293	8,497,095	3,998	239	133	1,531	28,509	10,011,798
2009	1,543,174	7,368,645	37,793	243	10,821	29	11,835	8,972,540
% Change	4	-13	945	102	8,136	-98	-58	-10

Pig Movements and Tattooing

	Issue Gilts	Issue Boars	Piglets Tattooed	Trans of Fatt. *
Tattooing Malta	2,092	159	101,695	505
Tattooing Gozo	156	7	5,860	n/a
Totals	2,248	166	107,555	505

Balance of sows as on December, 2009: 6,826

Balance of boars as on December, 2009: 382

PROGRAMMES SECTION

Diesel Duty Free Allocation

In accordance with the current agreement that the Government has with the two fishers' co-operatives, the amount of 4,868,454 litres of duty free fuel were allocated for about 330 categories A and B fishing vessels where 2,887,770 litres were utilised.

Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance 2004 – 2006

During 2009, the Operations Division within MRRA concluded the Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance 2004 – 2006. The Maltese fisheries sector benefited from about €3 million which aid was co-financed by the European Union and the Maltese Government.

An extension till 31 June 2009 was granted to Malta, from the Commission, in order to finalise and conclude the pending issues of the Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance. By the end of the second quarter of 2009, calls for fleet modernisation and adjustment for fishing effort were re-launched, evaluated, implemented and concluded. Four fishing vessels stopped their fishing activities and their fishing effort through the adjustment of fishing effort aid scheme. These fishing vessels benefited from about €377,437 and 48.27 Gross Tonnage was deregistered from the Malta Fishing Fleet and Community Fishing Fleet Register.

During 2009, several fishing vessels and marketing and processing establishments were modernised through the Fleet Modernisation and Marketing and Processing schemes under the Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance Programme 2004 – 2006. All the projects planned were completed.

The Hard Standing Facility at Ponta tal-Qrejten Marsaxlokk was equipped with two portable fire stations, plates, base blocks, boat supports and other useful operational equipment. About 270 fishing vessels were hoisted and used the Hard Standing Facility and generated about €90,000 in income.

Management and control systems were implemented within the Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance schemes and included procedures to verify the delivery of the products and services co-financed and the reality of expenditure claimed in order to ensure compliance with the Structural Funds Regulations. The procedures were verified via audits conducted by the Internal Audit and Investigations Directorate and on-the-spot checks conducted by the Managing Authority (PPCD). The records stated the work done, the results of the verification and the measures taken in respect of discrepancies. 99% of the

funds committed to the Maltese fisheries sector under the Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance Programme 2004 – 2006 were utilised.

European Fisheries Fund 2007 – 2013

In December 2008, the Maltese Operational Programme was approved and in 2009 the Operations Division commenced the planning and drafting of the projects and the aid schemes.

The plans for the new fish market have been designed and the Division applied for the necessary MEPA permits. As soon as all relevant permits are issued, the Division will start publishing tenders for the construction and procurement of equipment for the new fish market. Tenders for consultants of the fish market and processing area have been launched.

During 2009, Instruction Notes were drafted for all the different conferences held by the Commission.

With regard to the Managing Authority, two monitoring committees were organised to assess progress of the European Fisheries Fund, presenting the various documents and reports that had to be prepared and presenting the necessary changes to the EFF structure and operational programme.

FISH MARKET ACCOUNTING SCHEME

Fish Landings

The estimated total landings for 2009 were 1,234,292 kg, valued at € 5,834,439. The average wholesale price works out at € 4.73 per kilo. Fish landed consisted mainly of Dolphin Fish, Swordfish and Blue Fin Tuna. An unusually large quantity of Mackerel was landed by Gozitan fishermen in July and August. The following table gives details of fish catches in 2008 – 2009:

Estimated Quantity		Value (€)				Average Retail (Price per kg)	
(kg)		Wholesale		Retail		(€)	
2008	2009	2008	2009	2008	2009	2008	2009
917,106	1,234,292	5,626,057	5,834,439	6,187,282	6,592,055	6.75	5.34

The actual landings recorded at the Wholesale Fish Market were 1,028,212 kg valued at € 4,912,897. Receipts from fish hawkers amounted to € 4,040,744, whilst payments made to fishers and 'pitkala' were € 4,052,544.

Export and Import of Fish

The Directorate endeavours to see that the fishermen's livelihood is safeguarded and at the same time ensures that the consumer is well provided throughout the whole year with a supply and variety of species of fish. 6,946,579 kg of frozen fish worth € 11,450,300, at an average price of € 1.65 per kilo and 413,629 kg of fresh fish valued at € 2,451,719, at an average price of € 5.13 were imported during 2009 as per following table:

Fish Imports 2008 - 2009							
Frozen Fish				Fresh Fish			
Quantity (Kg)		Value (€)		Quantity (Kg)		Value (€)	
2008	2009	2008	2009	2008	2009	2008	2009
5,161,228	6,946,579	10,961,352	11,450,300	273,948	413,629	1,895,304	2,451,719

262,741 kg in round weight of blue fin tuna were caught by Maltese fishers. 150,371 kg of captured Blue Fin Tuna and Swordfish valued at € 1,179,556, at an average price of € 7.84 were exported to Japan and Italy as shown in the following table:

Fish	Quantity (Kg)		Value (€)	
	2008	2009	2008	2009
Blue Fin Tuna	109,984	101,761	1,000,527	807,929
Swordfish	60,304	48,610	534,710	371,627
Albacore	483	0	983	0
Dolphin Fish	2,624	0	9,278	0
Total	173,413	150,371	1,545,498	1,179,556

Limited quantities of other species of fish were also exported during 2009

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

- Updating of Occupational Risk Assessment/s and overseeing control measures as per Act 27 of 2002, Legal Notices 36 of 2003 and other subsequent OH&S legislation. This is an ongoing process related to the control measures listed in the ORA.
- More fixing at strategic places of OH&S signs as per LN 45 of 2002
- Training of a First Aider as per LN 11 of 2002
- Election of Health & Safety Representatives as per LN 36 of 2003
- OH&S training to employees
- OH&S ongoing advice to employees
- Coordinating and enforcing the implementation of Reg. EC 1774/2002 (ABP).
- Participation at an Animal by-Products Working Group in Brussels
- Participation in a conference regarding ABP in Budapest

All workstations within the Operations Division have a multitude and variety of occupations ranging from the high risk abattoirs, laboratory, maintenance people (boilers, hoists, electricians, fitters, etc) incinerators, farmers, field workers, 'middle-men', laboratory workers and office workers, so OH&S is an ongoing process. Other 'outstations' within the Operations Division, such as the San Lucjan premises, are also being taken into account. The undersigned explained legal responsibilities as listed above to concerned personnel, especially the requirement of an adequate Occupational Risk Assessment. Information and a fill-in ORA template was forwarded to San Lucjan personnel so the process of Risk Assessment can be initiated. The same exercise was carried out with the security personnel

Systematic and random walk-around inspections (including enforcing the use of Personal Protective Equipment) at various work stations are done on a daily basis within the Civil Abattoir, and also other outpost workstations falling within the Operations Division merit.

During these inspections the various OH&S shortcomings were discussed on site with the responsible personnel, and where possible, immediate and adequate control measures were taken.

PITKALI MARKET

- In March 2009, the traffic management plan was concluded following various meetings with representatives from the Commissioner of Police and all the concerned entities at the Pitkali Markets (Pitkala, FCCS, Hawkers and ATB). This was done to ensure that both hawkers and farmers benefitted from better access. It was also agreed that a roundabout at the entrance of the Pitkali Markets would be ideal. To this extent, an application was submitted to MEPA.
- Hawkers are no longer parking outside the Pitkali Markets as they now have the opportunity to park in the ring-road, hence minimising traffic congestion. Entry at 9.00 a.m. also helped improve matters in this regard.
- A security room was erected at the main gate of the Pitkali Markets for the benefit of the security guards. Another security room is proposed for the entrance of the ring-road as now security guards are also monitoring traffic entering at this point.
- MITA was contracted to draw up specifications for a new IT system aimed at better control and transparency within the Pitkali Markets.

- The Pitkali Markets hosted the Single Payment Unit for the land registration application for 2009.
- Security guards' shift was extended to a 24hr basis for better discipline during normal business hours and better surveillance of the Pitkali Market grounds.
- To ensure more cleanliness, Ghammieri and Park's staff are cleaning the Pitkali grounds and Pitkala platforms with power washers every Wednesday.
- Specifications and conditions of a tender for one skip (30yards) and three skips (6 yards each) was also prepared. These are to be placed inside the Pitkali Market grounds. These skips are to be available until the CA site is ready; in fact relevant plans are expected to be finalised by January 2010. This will be for the benefit of farmers, *pitkala* and hawkers. Moreover fruit and vegetable leftovers are to be recycled.
- During the year the master plan for the Pitkali Markets was finalised by Architect David Xuereb. This includes the outline development for Gomriza, TQ PG and the extension of the already existing Pitkali Crates building which includes a garage and a water reservoir.
- Architect Cassar presented a detailed plan for the new building for Gomriza at the Pitkali Market premises.
- Quotations were obtained for an eventual replacing of the existing roof sheds.
- The Paying Agency officers were assisted by personnel from the Pitkali Administration in order to start inspections on site in Malta and Gozo for better control of all produce entering the Pitkali Markets.
- Plastering and maintenance of the roof was carried out at the proposed premises for the new call centre (Paying Agency), and a tender was awarded for the tiling and laying works of the said offices.
- The palm reader was introduced this year for better management.
- New PCs were installed in every office at the Pitkali Markets, replacing outdated ones.
- New office hours were introduced for Pitkali Clerks to ensure greater flexibility and efficiency.
- An extension of the platform from Pitkal 23 to Pitkal 41 was completed, and the extension of another platform from Pitkal 16 to Pitkal 14 is in hand. This will enable both farmers and hawkers to handle loading and unloading of fruits and vegetables more efficiently.
- The central strip of the ring-road was removed to make space for a parking lane and another for the entry of hawkers and farmers.
- The possibility of constructing a canopy at the main entrance of the Pitkali Markets was investigated. It was agreed that the canopy which was at the Government Petrol Station Hal Safi could be used instead.
- Housewives are now allowed to enter the Pitkali Markets at 1.00 p.m.. Stickers were also prepared to be used by the housewife so as to be distinguished from hawkers and farmers.
- General landscaping and maintenance works were carried out. These included the pruning of trees, trimming of hedges, cleaning of well and the removal of a section where dogs used to be kept.
- Meetings were held with high ranking officials and proposals were submitted to establish an inspection body responsible for the monitoring of fruit and vegetable standards.

Total Value (€) and weight (kg) of agricultural products negotiated by the private Pitkali, Co-operatives and the Ta' Qali PG

Pitkali		Co-op Stalls		Ta' Qali PG		Total (€)	
2008	2009	2008	2009	2008	2009	2008	2009
15,098,216	14,556,597	5,565,392	5,322,813	621,701	989,857	21,285,309	20,869,267

Pitkali		Co-op Stalls		Ta' Qali PG		Total (€)	
2008	2009	2008	2009	2008	2009	2008	2009
35,658,520	31,729,351	11,115,790	9,884,537	1,246,177	1,910,235	48,020,487	43,524,123

As can be shown from the above figures, the Pitkali registered a decrease of 1.5% (€416,042) over 2008 and a decrease of 9.36% (4,496,364Kgs) over 2008 for fruit and vegetable products.

PAUL FENECH GONZI
 Director (Wholesale Markets and Fishing Fleet Facilities)

Rural Development and Aquaculture Division

Aquaculture Research Section

AQUACULTURE RESEARCH SECTION

During 2009, the Aquaculture Research Section continued its commitments to two main projects, the local Amberjack Project and the Bluefin tuna project SELFDOTT, which is funded by the EU 7th Framework Programme. Apart from these projects, the Aquaculture Research Section worked on fish vaccines, health and safety awareness, various meetings and publicity as well as the upkeep of Fort San Luċjan.

Amberjack Project

The marine hatchery was run for 10 months of the year, under the auspices of the Amberjack Project. In January, sea bream eggs were incubated, followed by sea bass eggs in March, amberjack eggs in mid-May and June; and finally by Bluefin tuna eggs from the SELFDOTT Project in the first week of July.

A total of 455,000 sea bream, 82,000 sea bass fingerlings and around 1,000 amberjacks were produced. These were transferred to Malta Fishfarming Ltd cages as per the Amberjack Project Joint Venture Agreement. The Amberjack Project successfully developed broodstock management techniques whereby viable fertilised eggs can now be obtained during mid-May, one month before the natural spawning period. This is very advantageous as it can mean that another cycle can be performed before the natural one.

Moreover, the growth of the juvenile amberjacks produced was improved during the months of August and December. Further tests in conjunction with an Australian company confirmed 2008 results for the successful prophylactic treatment for the prevention of gill parasites in juvenile amberjacks. This was a big step forward in solving a problem that was contributing to the loss of over 70% of the production. Feeding trials were conducted using 3 different pellet feeds in the nursery at San Luċjan. Apart from these advances, the hatchery continued to develop its broodstock for sea bream and sea bass and improvements were done to the water system for the hatchery where filtration systems were improved.

Collaboration for the rearing of amberjack eggs was carried out with Aqua Azzurra SPA in Sicily and with Valle Ca' Zuliani in Italy.

EU SELFDOTT Tuna Project

A total of four broodstocks were held in Malta in 2009. Two were used for a broodstock nutrition trial and the other two were used for induction and egg collection.

In order to gather data for the development of a broodstock diet for BFT, samples of gonads were taken from wild-caught fish, followed by an experiment using two groups of broodstock that were fed on two different diets from the beginning of April to the end of June. During the spawning season, the fish were sacrificed and biometrics were measured. Samples of all gonads were taken for histology and nutrition studies and the quality of gametes was assessed. These samples were analysed in collaboration with the Hellenic Centre for Marine Research in Crete (HCMR), the University of Bari in Italy, the University of Düsseldorf in Germany, Institut Français de Recherche pour l'Exploitation de la Mer (IFREMER) in France and the Israel Oceanographic and Limnological Research/National Centre for Mariculture (IOLR/NCM). The experimental diet was shown to result in a superior growth, higher GSI values as well as significantly higher condition factors for both males and females.

The broodstocks that were induced for egg production did not produce any good viable eggs. Based on gonadal data obtained from another broodstock maintained in the same site, as well as from fish randomly sacrificed from this stock after the hormonal therapy, it was seen that the hormonal treatment might have been given too late in the season, as most of the fish were over mature. Eggs were collected from the other broodstock maintained in Spain during the same period, probably because the Spanish spawning season comes after the Maltese one. It was also hypothesised that the hydraulic conditions of the site (water current) and the depth that the fish could be spawning, resulted in the dispersal of any eggs released prior to their entering the area that could be captured by the employed egg collector. A current survey commissioned in September showed that the current was very variable and strong, indicating that if any eggs were released, they would have been carried away.

Data loggers for temperature and light intensity were placed at 8 points all around one of the spawning cages.

Approximately 500 samples were collected for genetics throughout 2009; these samples were sent to HCMR in Crete for analyses.

Egg transport “dummy trials” were also carried out to investigate temperature variations during air transport to Heraklion in Crete and Montpellier in France.

Fish Vaccine Testing

A number of vaccine safety tests were carried out on juvenile sea bream in connection with the testing contract with Schering Plough Aquaculture Ltd. The three year contract ended in 2009 and a new contract was drawn up, and will be effective for 5 years from 2010.

Health and Safety Awareness

A Health and Safety awareness course was organised for all the workers within the Aquaculture Research Section. Twelve workers received a certificate of attendance. During this course, a Health and Safety representative was nominated.

Various measures to improve health and safety especially in the hatchery were implemented, with due consideration to the use of electricity in these sections.

Meetings

- Attended SELFDOTT Annual Meeting at the Università di Bari 2 – 5 March, 2009.
- Meeting of Malta – Tunisia mixed commission held in Malta 24 – 25 March, 2009.
- SELFDOTT meetings and sampling in Malta 22 – 26 June, 2009.
- Attended the SIPAM Annual Meeting held in Trabzon, Turkey from 9 – 10 December, 2009.
- Various meetings were held to start preparing a detailed Aquaculture Strategy for Malta. This strategy should be finalised in 2010.

Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)

During 2009, contribution was given as regards data input and upkeep of the website for Malta aquaculture information.

Publicity

- Television appearance in *Hadd Ghalik* on TVM during February.
- Television appearances on X'Qala 'l-Baħar. These were on sea bream hatchery production, on the Amberjack Project and on the EU Bluefin tuna project, SELFDOTT.

- A documentary on Aquaculture in *Science Sense* on TVM. This documentary spoke about current aquaculture production and research carried out on various branches of aquaculture.

Upkeep of Fort San Lucjan

General cleaning was carried out during 2009. This included the removal of overgrown grass on the outer walls of the Tower. The bastions were cleaned and efforts were made to stop water leakages from the bastion side walls into the surrounding moat.

The fattening area was upgraded and renovated. A lot of work was carried out in the Caponiers below the tower. Excess water was drained from these caponiers and an automatic pump system was fitted to avoid underground water accumulation. Electricity was installed all throughout the Caponiers.

All the main pipes supplying sea water to the various tank systems were thoroughly cleaned for a better and more efficient flow.

A progressive cleaning programme is being effected to enhance cleanliness within and around the Fort.

Publications

Age and growth of Atlantic bluefin tuna, *Thunnus thynnus* (Osteichthyes: Thunnidae), in the Mediterranean Sea. N. Santamaria, G. Bello, A. Corriero, M. Deflorio, R. Vassallo-Agius, T. Bok and G. De Metrio. *J. Appl. Ichthyol.* 25 (2009) 38-205.

Preliminary study on changes of proximate and fatty acids composition in Bluefin tuna (*Thunnus thynnus* L.) gonads in different maturity stages. M. Garaffo, M. Ziino, E.Lembo, A. Corriero, M. Deflorio, R. Vassallo-Agius, G. Demetrio. 40° Congresso della Società Italiana di Biologia Marina, Livorno 26 – 29 Maggio, 2009.

The first spawning success and egg collection from captive Atlantic Bluefin tuna (*Thunnus thynnus* L.) in the Mediterranean Sea - Progress towards domestication. De Metrio G, Bridges C.R, Mylonas C.C, Caggiano M, Deflorio M, Santamaria N, Zupa R, Pousis C, Vassallo-Agius R, Gordin H, Corriero A. *J. Appl. Ichthyol.* Submitted (2009).

Reproducing the Atlantic Bluefin tuna in captivity: the Italian experience. De Metrio G, Caggiano M, Deflorio M, Mylonas C.C, Bridges C. R, Santamaria N, Caprioli R, Zupa R, Pousis C, Vassallo-Agius R, Gordin H, Corriero A. SCRS 2009.

DR ROBERT VASSALLO AGIUS
Head Aquaculture Research

Rural Development and Aquaculture Division Parks, Afforestation and Rural Conservation Department

INTRODUCTION

PARC's main focus during 2009 was the completion of the Ta' Qali Adventure Park, initiated in previous years. Consequently, whilst seeing to the various sites entrusted, PARC personnel worked relentlessly to meet the pre-set deadline for the official opening of this Park.

Notwithstanding, PARC pursued its objectives throughout the year, namely: the development of new afforestation areas, upkeep of established parks and afforestation sites, concrete contribution to a number of environmental projects undertaken in collaboration with environmental NGOs, not to mention the assuming of various other initiatives aimed at the conservation and embellishment of the natural environment.

Mellieha – Foresta 2000

This is a partnership project between Birdlife Malta, Din l-Art Helwa and PARC. The main concept of the Foresta 2000 is the recreation of tracts of Mediterranean woodland, which is a rare and threatened habitat in Malta. This will have significant conservation value for a whole range of flora and fauna, many of which are threatened or endemic species. In addition, the project also aims at curbing desertification and restore and protect other major component natural habitats, particularly garigue and maquis.

The scope of these works is to ensure the overall health of these habitats by addressing and managing any of the prevailing threats. At the same time, the project will play an important role in education and tourism.

A management plan for the site has been established and a related document has been submitted to MEPA. Details concerning the various aspects of this project, such as the access points, the heritage sites, parking areas and the conservation of the relevant species are currently being discussed with MEPA and the required documentation prepared for submission. Reinstatement of rubble walls throughout the project site has been carried out during 2009. The PARC department, jointly with Birdlife officials, was also responsible for the planting of trees, staking, watering and related tasks.

Site at Rdum Tal-Madonna – Mellieha

The scope of these works is to improve the Natura 2000 site for nature conservation and control of visitors. Works include: the formation of a car park, the installation of a traffic barrier, alignment for turning circle, installation of BBQ pits, project information signs and repair of rubble walls.

Salina National Park

During 2009, this new park underwent further planting and embellishment works. Works at Salina National Park, including the upgrade of the Kennedy Grove area were completed as planned and re-inaugurated in November 2009. The whole park now covers an area of 73,000 m². More fields were developed at the park, levelled and landscaped as more tree planting sessions took place under the 34U

campaign. More than 200 m³ of rubble wall were erected which even serve to define different terraces of planted areas. Further landscaping into adjacent fields is projected in the near future.

Embellishment works included the planting of about 1,200 trees and shrubs, the manufacturing and placing on site of wooden picnic tables and the fixing and placing of wooden animal figures in the children's area adjacent to the water stream.

Ta' Qali Adventure Park

Works on this project continued relentlessly during 2009. In fact the Adventure Park was officially inaugurated on 19 December 2009 by the Hon Prime Minister.

Works on the entire Adventure Park site, situated on the ex-runway, flanked between the much popular Picnic Area on one side and the Meridiana grape vineyards on the other, commenced in mid-July 2008, stretching approximately 400m in length and 45m in width.

The entire site is divided into two play areas with an Amenity Building centrally located in between. While one area hosts play equipment and water features earmarked for children up to twelve years of age, the other which hosts the Rope Course is earmarked for older children and adults alike. On the other hand, the Amenity Building hosts separate male and female sanitary facilities, including those for disabled people, an office, a store and meter room, and catering facilities.

Printed concrete and tarmac paved pathways, totally amounting to approximately an area of 1,800m² were laid, while both main and back entrances are flanked by two large planters on either side. Upon entering the park, through the main entrance, visitors are welcomed by one of five newly constructed water features each around seven metres in diameter, with individual water and lighting displays, some being interactive. These water features are further complemented with franka stoned covered walkways, under which flows water into three particularly shaped ponds with coloured stepping stones to add a further sense of adventure. Crossing over the span of two larger ponds is two humped timber bridges which supplement that added value to the whole site.

The five play areas, varying in size and shape, situated between the main entrance and the Amenity building, total an area of approximately 1300m², four of which are covered in green and red floor rubber carpeting while the other, purposely left as open space is covered in artificial turf. On all four areas, there is fixed unique and innovative play equipment which caters for various child age groups as well as for those with special needs. All play areas are complemented with adequate seating all covered with a unique timber structured canopy. Further still, garden furniture include two timber gazebos, strategically positioned between two pathways. The entire area is well lit with over 60 decorative lamp posts which add that distinctive character to the whole project.

Special care was taken in making sure that controlled vehicular accessibility was well incorporated in the design. In fact, a service road, separate from pedestrian access and adequate to take water tankers, trucks, fire engines and ambulances, in case of emergencies, runs along the entire site, managed by two controlled gates at either end.

The site is also supported by a water reservoir measuring 20m in length, 5m metres in width and 3m in height holding approximately 300 m³ or 300,000 l of rain water, collected from the surface run-off, of the said service road. This to help in the water irrigation of trees and shrubs, planted in the area.

Another water reservoir situated below one particular water feature, measuring 6m in length and width and 3m in depth, holding approximately 100 m³ or 100,000 l of water supports the water features display and smaller ponds. Adjacent to both these two reservoirs, operates a pump room measuring 5.5 m in length and 3.25m in width, hosting quality pumps, equipment related to water displays and water purification and electrical switch gear. One other hidden infrastructure is a cesspit situated below ground level, measuring

8.0m in length, 4.0m in width and 3.0m in depth, holding approximately 96m³ or 9,600lit of waste drainage water flowing from the public facilities in the Amenity Building. The entire area is also served with a 200 m)long, covered service culvert, housing all water piping, drains and cables.

The other area which is also accessible through the back entrance gate, boasts of what is known as ‘The Rope Course’ – an innovative large steel structure from which a series of rope networks are suspended at vertiginous heights. This is unique to the Maltese islands and should prove to be a breakthrough in the local sport arena.

The rope course structure which measures 24m in length, 12m in width and 9m in height is divided into two tiers suitable for both the adventurous and the more determined climbers. For security reasons, the perimeter of the facility was fenced in with galvanised elements. For safety precautions, the facility is always supported by qualified instructors.

Works and Infrastructure

Considering the entire site area and work intensity, the work force assigned on this project was significantly low. Five groups of workers, three from the PARC Department and two from the Works Division respectively, totalling to 24, were assigned to execute construction works, supported with three heavy plant drivers. Well advanced through project development, other trade supportive groups were assigned and involved in works related to plastering, rendering, electrical and plumbing works, garden furniture, etc. Other works related to play equipment and water features were assigned to private contractors.

Soon after major works were concluded, the entire soft area was machine-ploughed many a time and hand-racked in preparation to turf-seed sowing. Simultaneously, hundreds of trees and shrubs were meticulously planted, creating a further welcoming feature to the Park.

Picnic Area

During 2009, wire fencing was laid along the perimeter of the Picnic Area to enhance its security from ongoing traffic along adjacent roads.

Xrobb I-Ghagin Nature Park

Works on the ex-Deutsche Welle building continued into 2009. The building will house a research area, laboratories and will host students studying on marine environment. The whole project is being carried out in collaboration with Nature Trust.

Works include the removal of an existing dangerous structure, rebuilding of same wall and laying of ceiling. A total of fifteen tenders have been identified. Some were awarded, others are being prepared or in the process of being issued.

Initiatives

Red Palm Weevil Control Programme

During 2009, in close collaboration with the Plant Biotechnology Centre and the Cleansing Services Directorate, PARC consolidated the implementation of the Red Palm Weevil Control Programme throughout the Maltese Islands. The spread of this insect proved to be extremely destructive to the palm species.

To further supplement this disease control exercise, the PARC Department, in close collaboration with the Plant Biotechnology Centre introduced also the Endotherapy Scheme. The endotherapy scheme aims at

preventing those trees which have not yet been attacked by the insect, by injecting them with a specific chemical. A number of palm trees at Ta' Qali National Park have been treated in this manner.

34U Campaign

This very successful environmental campaign continued unrelentlessly during the year under review. It is estimated that between 2004 and 2008, around 81,000 trees were planted across the Island. During 2009 alone, 20,600 were planted under this initiative.

Highlights for 2009 include:

- the annual Tree Planting Weekend;
- the 34U Operatic Weekend held in October at the Manoel Theatre (part takings diverted to the planting of 700 trees);
- Eden Lifestyle Group deal, through which a deal was signed with MRRA for the planting of 24,000 trees as their commitment to the world environment - a third of these trees were planted in 2009;
- the introduction of the 34U Tree for Graduate scheme;
- 4,500 trees planted in Xrobb I-Ghagin under by Ekoskola and HSBC;
- 3,000 trees planted at the Ta' Qali Adventure Park.

Environment Awareness

During 2009, the PARC Department continued its environment awareness programme to encourage the general public, especially the younger generation, to better appreciate the importance of indigenous trees.

Classroom sessions for primary schools were organised with the aim of providing a hands-on experience in indigenous tree planting. PARC provided the seeds and necessary materials for each child to plant his/her own tree. Field visits for circa 500 students were also organised throughout the year in areas of ecological importance. During such visits, tree and habitat studies were carried out.

Hands-on indigenous tree planting sessions were also held in various local councils, during 34U planting sessions and *Naturalment Malti* events held by the Ministry in Malta and Gozo.

Lectures on Ecology as a touristic product were also delivered to staff engaged in the tourism sector.

Centre for Environment Education and Research (CEER)

The Ministry for Resources and Rural Affairs had, for some years, been collaborating with the University of Malta to establish a Centre for Environment Education and Research (CEER).

CEER shall seek to catalyse change towards a sustainable society by providing opportunities for environmental education that empower citizens, irrespective of age, gender and socio-economic status, to actively participate in environmental decision making fora and in initiatives that promote a good quality of life (*CEER's Mission Statement*). CEER shall thus be committed towards developing environmental education (education for sustainable development) as a field of expertise that requires preparation and training to effectively support sustainable development initiatives.

To this end, the Ministry entered into an agreement with the University to assist in the physical as well as the financial aspect of establishing this centre. During 2009, this responsibility was assigned to the PARC Department.

The Centre shall be housed at a former primary school in Fawwara. Extensive structural and finishing works had to be undertaken. Internal works included: electricity and plumbing installation, painting, manufacture and fixing of wooden apertures, kitchen cupboards, metal door railings, gate and aluminium

partitions. External works included: clearing of site, formation of pathways, rubble wall building and landscaping of the area. The project is expected to be completed during 2010.

On the administrative aspect, PARC is also discussing the revision of the current Memorandum of Understanding between MRRA and the UoM to better reflect the Ministry's portfolio as far as the environment aspect is concerned.

Reinstatement of Rubble Walls

During 2009, a total of 920 cubic metres of rubble wall were reinstated or repaired in various localities around Malta. Sites included: Triq Inżul ix-Xemx in Dingli, Madonna ta' L-Aħrax, in Mellieħa, Foresta 2000 Project in Mellieħa, Il-Park tal-Majjistral, Triq iċ-Ċimiterju tal-Inglizi and Ta' Buqana Road in Ta' Qali.

Drum Collection

More than 47 tons of material collected from 22 different sites were transported to be shredded and exported as recycled steel.

Petting Farm

During 2009, preparatory works for the establishment of a Petting Farm at Ta' Qali were commenced. This farm is intended to provide the opportunity to children and others to view animals usually reared on farms, something which we are rarely accustomed to nowadays.

During 2009, preparation of plans and preparatory work related to the submission of the MEPA application were taken in hand.

Rabbit Farm

A MEPA application was submitted in the previous year and in collaboration with other departments, PARK is discussing and responding to queries raised by MEPA on this application.

Other Works

Pembroke - Landscaping of a barren site at Triq Napuljun Tagliaferro c/w Triq F X Caruana

Works included clearing of site, construction of reservoir, formation of pathways, landscaping of areas, car park including finishes and electrical fittings. A total of 1500m³ of soil was transported to the site, laid and ploughed. Footpaths were constructed around the perimeter of the soil area, lamp posts, low lighting bollards and wooden benches were installed. A total of 60 trees and 434 shrubs were planted.

Il-Maghluq ta' M'Scala

During 2009, a chain link fence with a wind break cover was fixed on site along the road adjacent to the Maghluq pools. Grass cutting and cleaning of floating debris, under the supervision of MEPA, was carried out periodically.

Embellishment of land opposite Ursuline Sisters Church, Gwardamangia

Formation of soft and hard landscaping – works include formation of planters, reservoir, paved areas, completion of surrounding pedestrian kerb and parking; installation of street furniture; placing of monument in and other related works (pedestal, steps, metal works). The project is scheduled to be completed in 2010.

Support Services

To support most activities taken up by the Department/Ministry, the PARC is equipped with its own fully fledged carpentry, electrical and mechanical sections.

During 2009, the carpentry section was engaged in the manufacture of various wooden items including: picnic benches, wooden canopies and walking steps for the Adventure Park, animal sheds and stalls to be used in various activities and other day-to-day maintenance tasks.

The Electrical Section was engaged in, amongst others, replacing the bollard lighting system from metal highlight to an energy saving system at Salina Park. Various installation works were also carried out at Ghammieri Government Experimental Farm, an installation of a submersible pump at Torri Cumbo and a temporary installation at the prospective Animal Hospital. The Electrical Section is also responsible for carrying out repairs and maintenance works in the various premises and areas under PARC's responsibility.

Vehicle maintenance, as well as day-to-day repairs/servicing to agricultural equipment is undertaken by the Mechanical Section of PARC.

Other maintenance and general cleaning jobs are also conducted by the Maintenance Section of PARC. Hence, the cleaning of fountains, transportation of equipment required for Ministry's activities, painting and plastering works at various sites, as well as numerous other tasks, were carried out during 2009.

Administration

In view of the increasing responsibilities of PARC, the strengthening of the administrative structure and organisation to better respond to current and the immediate future needs was given due importance in 2009.

Consolidation of human resources included the assignment of an Assistant Director – Administration and Initiatives. This new post, besides assuming the responsibility of the Administration of PARC, carries also the onus of coordinating a number of mostly environmental initiatives taken on by MRRA. Such initiatives include: CEER, EkoSkola, Young Reporters for the Environment and the 34U Campaign, among others.

HERMAN GALEA

Parks, Afforestation and Rural Conservation Unit

Rural Development and Aquaculture Division

Plant Health Department

BACKGROUND

The Plant Health Department is the National Plant Protection Organisation set up within the Ministry for Resources and Rural Affairs to prevent the introduction into the community of organisms harmful to plants or plant products or their spread within the Community, in line with the Community's plant health regime.

The Community plant health regime is established by [Council Directive 2000/29/EC](#) of 8 May 2000 on protective measures against the introduction into the Community of organisms harmful to plants or plant products and against their spread within the Community. The general principles are based upon provisions laid down in the International Plant Protection Convention concluded at the United Nation Food and Agriculture Organisation and, in the World Trade Organisation Agreement on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures.

Harmful organisms are defined as any species, strain or biotype of plant, animal or pathogenic agent injurious to plants or plants products.

The Plant Health Department is also responsible for monitoring the market of propagation material in the Maltese territory with the aim of having available in circulation high quality propagation and planting material. The Department also deals with plant variety rights and the conservation of plant genetic resources.

In order to meet the above aim, rights and obligations are placed upon Member States to regulate the movement of plants or plant products within their territory and to regulate the introduction of plants or plant products into the Community from third countries. Obligations are placed upon third countries which want to export plants or plant products to the Community.

INTRODUCTION

In 2009 the Plant Health Department continued to implement measures with the aim of preventing the introduction and spread of harmful organisms in the community. The main results achieved by the Department during this year were related to the fight against the Red Palm Weevil and included the publication of relevant legal notice, the registration of palm trees, dendrosurgery as a preventive insecticide treatment for the control of the pest, and eradication of the pest through tree uprooting and destruction. Malta also managed to secure funds as compensation for costs incurred for the control of the Red Palm Weevil during 2008 and 2009, through a request for financial assistance under the Solidarity Dossier.

Another event that marked the year 2009 was the outbreak of the tomato leaf miner pest, *Tuta absoluta*. In Malta it was reported for the first time in a greenhouse at Dingli in April 2009. Consequently the Plant Health Department issued Government Notice accordance to Part V (Containment and Eradication of Plant Pests) of the Plant Quarantine Act, to notify the presence of the tomato leaf miner, *Tuta absoluta*, in Malta, classifying it as a harmful pest, and empowering the Department to take any actions accordingly. A number of diagnosis, control and monitoring actions were put in place by the Department during 2009, and at the same time, information and awareness campaigns were launched in order to sensitise stakeholders to this new problem that has already had significant economic impacts on the agricultural sector, particularly the tomato growing sector, including tomato processing.

LEGISLATION

A number of directives, regulations and decisions that were adopted during the year were either transposed or adopted directly. Eight legal notices and a government notice were published in 2009. Two draft legal notices transposing Commission Directive 2009/97/EC on the examination of varieties of agricultural plant and vegetable species were forwarded by the PHD for the necessary approvals in December 2009.

Memorandum of Understanding

The Plant Health Department and the Customs Division signed a Memorandum of Understanding on the 22 December in order to facilitate the reciprocal operations of both parties and to enhance their respective capabilities in the fight against the spread of harmful organisms within the Community. The two entities have come to this agreement to establish a protocol of working methods to be ordinarily applicable to their mutual operations.

EU AFFAIRS

The Plant Health Department continued to participate in EU-related meetings for discussion of new proposals, working parties, and justification of country positions and a number of officials attended the meetings organised by the EU Commission and other EU structures.

For a number of meetings, Malta was represented by the Technical Attaché of the Permanent Representation of Malta in Brussels. On such occasions, all documents were scrutinised, and instruction notes and comments were formulated accordingly.

Communications

Information was sent to the Commission on the national Pine Wood Nematode monitoring programmes, import controls of susceptible wood, and controls of susceptible wood moving from PWN-demarcated areas in the EU to free areas.

The following information concerning seeds and propagation material was sent to the Commission.

- Comments and information on the quantitative restrictions for the marketing of seeds belonging to conservation varieties of vegetables in view of the adoption of a Commission directive controlling such marketing;
- Comments on derogations by various Member States for the authorisation to market seeds of agricultural plants that do not satisfy the established minimum germination capacity;
- Information on the implementation of Commission Decision 2004/842/EC on the marketing of seeds of not yet listed varieties;
- Comments on the revision of the common names and other nomenclature in the directives concerning the marketing of seeds of agricultural plants covered by EU directives;
- Comments on a draft Commission directive covering the examination of varieties of agricultural plants and vegetables;
- Comments on the working documents of the European Commission on the implementing measures that shall be adopted at Commission level on propagation material and whole plants of fruit trees;
- Comments on the adoption of a directive regulating the marketing of local varieties and landraces of vegetable propagation and planting material; and
- Communication regarding vegetable varieties that enter Malta from other Member States and that are being used in Malta as rootstocks.

Reporting obligations

The following is a list of reporting obligations that Malta reported upon in 2009:

- Commission Decision 2003/61/EC, and its amendments, authorising certain Member States to provide for temporary derogations from certain provisions of Council Directive 2000/29/EC in respect of seed potatoes originating in certain provinces of Canada
- Council Directives 93/85/EEC and 98/57/EEC and their amendments re : Brown rot and Ring rot
- Directive 2002/499/EC and Directive 2002/887/EC and amendments on authorising derogations from certain provisions of Council Directive 2000/29/EC in respect of naturally or artificially dwarfed plants of *Chamaecyparis* Spach, *Juniperus* L. and *Pinus* L., originating in the Republic of Korea and Japan respectively
- Commission Decision 2004/4/EC and amendment (Egypt potatoes)
- Commission Decision 2003/63/EC and amendments (potatoes from Cuba)
- Commission Directive 95/44/EC and amendments (material for research)
- Article 2 of Commission Decision 2007/847/EC of 6 December 2007 providing for a derogation from certain provisions of Council Directive 2000/29/EC in respect of plants of *Vitis* L., other than fruits, originating in Croatia of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. It was reported that there were no imports in Malta during 2009 import season.
- With respect to the Commission Decision of 2004/200/EC on measures to prevent the introduction into and spread within the Community of Pepino mosaic virus, survey data was forwarded.
- Commission Decision 2002/757/EC as amended by Commissions Decisions 2004/426/EC & 2007/201/EC on provisional emergency phytosanitary measures to prevent the introduction into and the spread within the Community of *Phytophthora ramorum* Werres, De Cock & Man in 't Veld sp.nov (notified under document number C(202) 3380)
- Commission Decisions 2003/248/EC, 2003/249/EC and 2003/250/EC authorising Member States to provide for temporary derogations from certain provisions of Council Directive 2000/29/EC in respect of plants of strawberry (*Fragaria* L.), intended for planting, other than seeds, originating in Argentina, Chile and Republic of South Africa respectively. Malta reported that there were no imports of plants of strawberry from the above-mentioned countries during 2009 to date.
- Commission Decision 2004/96/EC authorising Member States to provide for temporary derogations from certain provisions of Council Directive 2000/29/EC in respect of plants of *Vitis* L., originating in Switzerland. Please note that there were no imports of plants of *Vitis* L. from Switzerland during 2009 to date.
- Commission decision 2007/433/EC on provisional emergency measures to prevent the introduction into the spread within the Community of *Gibberella circinata* Nirenberg & O'Donnel
- Commission Decision 2006/133/EC requiring Member States temporarily to take additional measures against the dissemination of *Bursaphelenchus xylophilus* (Steiner et Buhner) Nickle et al. (the pine wood nematode) as regards areas in Portugal, other than those in which it is known not to occur (notified under document number C(2006) 345)
- Communication as stipulated in Commission Decision 2005/51/EC as amended by Decision 2007/156/EC which authorises members States to provide for temporary derogations of Council Directive 2000/29/EC, in respect of the importation of soil contaminated by pesticides or persistent organic pollutants for decontamination purposes was forwarded as per reporting obligation checklist. Malta reported that there were no imports in Malta of such soil, during 2009 import season.
- Reference is made to Article 5 of Commission Decision 2006/464/EC concerning the surveys for the presence of, or for evidence of infestation by *Dryocosmus kuriphilus* Yasamatsu, the oriental chestnut gall wasp, due to the fact that this pest infests only chestnut trees, and due to the fact that this sole host plant species is not grown in Malta, no official surveys were conducted for the possible presence of *Dryocosmus kuriphilus* during 2009.
- In relation to Article 2 of Commission Decision 2003/766/EC on emergency measures to prevent the spread within the Community of *Diabrotica vigifera* Le Conte, Malta reported that *Zea mays* is not commercially cultivated in Malta, hence, no surveys for the presence of *Diabrotica vigifera* Le Conte were conducted.
- Commission decision 2007/410/EC (PSTVd)

Notifications

Seven notifications were sent to the European Commission via the EUROPHYT database and these were five notifications about missing documentation, one about the presence of harmful organisms and one about prohibition of plants. Besides another fpir internal communications to the European Commission were sent – relating to Citrus Tristeza virus, *Tuta absoluta*, *Paysandisia archon* and Potato Spindle Tuber Viroid.

Notifications from other Member States on the lists of varieties of seeds of agricultural plants and vegetables that are authorised for marketing in the EU according to EU law were reviewed daily. Communication was held with the respective foreign authorities to enquire about information on proposed varieties and places of trials when the need arose.

EU Documentation

Documents, instruction notes and explanatory memoranda on food security, EC biodiversity action plan, EU strategy on invasive species, export of fruit and vegetables from the EU to USA, the agreements between the EU and the Swiss Confederation, Korea and Canada on trade in agricultural products and intellectual property rights were reviewed and comments forwarded as requested.

Restricted and unrestricted memoranda were drafted on the codified version [COM(2009)299 final] of all the EU legislation in force on the marketing of seed potatoes in the European Union and on COM(2009)424 final on a new Proposal for a Council Directive as regards the delegation of tasks of laboratory testing.

MULTILATERAL AND NATIONAL AFFAIRS

The Plant Health Department continued to respond to questionnaires and take part in consultations on draft standards and other items circulated for members' opinion by the International Plant Protection Convention office and the European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organisation.

Communication was held between the Seeds and Propagation Materials Unit (SPMU) and the Community Plant Variety Office (CPVO), and comments provided by the former mainly on the examination offices to be entrusted for the testing of plant species, various draft technical protocols used for the examination of varieties, the EU legislation that covers the quality of plant material for examination, CPVO strategic plan and the contents of Official Gazettes.

The Department continued to participate in a number of national committees including the Plant Protection Board, the Red Palm Weevil Commission, the Food Safety Commission and the Bio-Safety Coordinating Committee.

The Plant Protection Board which was set up in 2008 is a statutory advisory board and is constituted in terms of the Plant Quarantine Act (Chapter 433). During 2009 the board met seven times.

Current issues concerning Plant Quarantine were discussed during Plant Protection Board meetings. This year's main issues were Red Palm Weevil, Citrus Tristeza Virus (CTV), and the Tomato Leafminer (*Tuta absoluta*). The board was continually updated with the plans of actions being taken by the Plant Health Department with regards the Red Palm Weevil. With respect to the CTV, the board unanimously endorsed the proposed compensatory measures and the line of action being suggested by the PHD to monitor and control the virus, which was discovered in areas of San Blas Valley and Dahlet Qorrot Valley in Gozo. Since the outbreak of the *Tuta absoluta* in Malta, which was first mentioned during a PPB board meeting in April, the board has put forward various suggested measures for the control of the disease. The board also recommended carrying out further monitoring for the moth in tomato fields. Financial aid to growers as an incentive for mass trapping was also recommended.

DIAGNOSIS AND CONTROL

Monitoring and Surveys

As in previous years, in 2009, the Plant Health Department continued its programme of annual surveys to assess the local situation with respect to emerging pests. The monitoring and testing of certain quarantine and harmful organisms is also regulated by Council Decisions and Directives.

During 2009, a total of 18 surveys were carried out in relation to the following areas of diagnosis – virology, bacteriology, mycology, entomology, and nematology covering approximately 82.3 hectares during which a total of 2,716 samples were collected.

Outbreak of Pests

In 2009, a new Lepidopteran pest to the Maltese Islands: *Tuta absoluta* (Tomato leafminer), from a tomato greenhouse was recorded for the first time in April.

Contingency, Emergency and Eradication Plans

Contingency plans have been drawn up and submitted to the Commission in respect to the following pests: Brown Rot/Ring Rot, Red Palm Weevil, Citrus Tristeza Virus, Colorado Beetle, *Tilletia indica* and Pine Wood Nematode.

Controls

The Plant Health Department destroyed a number of CTV infected trees at San Blas Gozo via an enforcement action during which a total of 66 CTV infected citrus trees were cut by chainsaws until officials were stopped from the destruction process by a legal mandate produced by the same farmers. Another 26 trees were subsequently destroyed on another date, after the Gozo Court of Justice refused the mandate order. Following monitoring carried out by the Department in the area under contingency, another case of CTV infected tree was found in the same location and action was taken for its destruction.

Financial Assistance

In April, Malta requested financial contribution in respect of control measures implemented in 2008 and in 2009 for the control of the Red Palm Weevil, *Rhynchophorus ferrugineus*. Malta, together with other Member States, established a programme of actions to eradicate the pest affecting palm trees in its territory, specifically on the island of Malta, which is considered a demarcated zone. The dossier submitted by Malta was deemed to be eligible due to the fact that it is impossible to trace back the origin of the infected consignment. This is because the organism spends a long incubation period inside its host before symptoms are evident. The sum allocated to Malta was €354,613, amounting to 50% of eligible expenditure incurred for control measures. These measures are to be financed by the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund.

SEEDS AND OTHER PROPAGATION MATERIALS

Production and marketing of plant material

Letters were sent to Maltese suppliers and importers of seeds and other propagation material of agricultural plants, vegetables, fruit trees and vines covered by the national legislation in connection with the registration of varieties of all plant material being propagated and/or marketed in Malta. A number of suppliers provided relevant information to the SPMU. Each notified variety was checked for its inclusion in the current EU Common Catalogues of varieties and their supplements. Communication with the

relevant notifiers had to be held for clarification purposes and other EU Member States had to be contacted about some varieties which were not found in the catalogues. National catalogues of varieties were updated accordingly.

Communication and coordination was held mainly between the SPMU and other MRRA units in order to amend the SIU notification forms in connection with the entry of commodities in Malta, conduct inspections at local entities, gather information on the cultivation of local varieties of vegetables and preservation seed mixtures that are also being marketed in the Maltese Islands, provide data on the varieties of seed potatoes introduced in Malta, gather statistical data on potatoes with respect to the issues of farm-saved seeds, agricultural exemptions and protection of material with Community plant variety rights.

21 inspections (physical and documentary) were carried out at local nurseries and producers by the SPMU together with the SIU, during which checklists based on the provisions of the national legislation on the marketing of seeds and propagation material of vegetables, fruit trees and ornamentals, were followed. In general, the plant material inspected was found to be healthy but nurseries and suppliers have to work more on record keeping and traceability. Other checklists on the marketing, production and critical control points for vines, seeds of agricultural plants and vegetables and forest trees are being drafted. These shall also be used for future inspections.

Trials on local varieties of agricultural plants and vegetables

The trials on varieties that are known to be local have been conducted during this year in the fields of the Plant Biotechnology Centre. Varieties of cauliflower, onion, carrot, broad bean, kohlrabi, garlic and a type of radish have been grown. Due to the bad weather at the beginning of the year, a number of plants were destroyed. Information on the characteristics of the varieties was collected where possible, following international guidelines.

Production of fruit trees

Work was carried out on the possibility of propagation of virus-free local varieties of citrus trees, conditions that need to be satisfied by mother plants from where propagation material is taken for further propagation, sanitation of local plant material and the availability of the necessary facilities for the keeping of plant stock and for the testing of plant material. A scheme for the certification of Citrus plant material was drafted for this matter.

Agri-measures and rural development funds

During the year, the SPMU undertook the permanent registration of old fruit trees that are still being grown in Malta and Gozo as part of the PHD's aim to collect information on local varieties and also for financial support that is given to farmers that are in possession of endangered old varieties that are at risk of genetic erosion. Such registration was held between 16 March and 9 June. The financial support is covered by the Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 (agri-environmental measure 9). This activity which was held in collaboration with the Paying Agency, IACS Section (Gozo) and the Rural Development Department involved discussions on the inclusion of new species under the measure, the preparation of all the necessary documentation and amendment to existing databases, problem solving in connection with the information received, etc. 184 persons from Malta and Gozo registered their fruit trees. 368 certificates were issued by the SPMU and 6,193 trees of various species have been registered.

Also during 2009, the SPMU commenced work related to agri-environmental measure 3 on the sowing of weed-free seeds by farmers for forage purposes and avoidance of the use of herbicides in the post-emergence period. This consisted in the testing of seed samples of silla, wheat, barley and oats that were

submitted by farmers who applied for such measure for the determination of purity of such seeds. The SPMU prepared all the necessary documentation and guidelines in view of this activity.

SURVEILLANCE AND INSPECTORATE

Registration

During 2009 there were 19 new entries in the Traders Registration as per LN 97/2004 regulation 6. Thus the total number of importers, traders of various agricultural products and timber imports now is 262.

Certification

During the year, 34 inspections took place in nurseries and garden centres in accordance with LN 97/2004 regarding the annual inspections for plant passport. A total of 21,481 plant passports were issued for those plants and plant products that need plant passports. 28 export phytosanitary certificates for exports and four re-export phytosanitary certificates were issued during 2009.

Market Surveillance

All consignments imported in Malta are subject to documentary checks and 340 documentary checks took place in 2009. All 340 consignments were inspected both for identity and phytosanitary checks. In addition, all consignments having wood packaging material attached to them which varies from dunnage and pallets were physically inspected whether to conform with the ISPM no.15 standards and for any other pests of Pine wood nematode and *Monochamus* spp.

Sampling and Inspections for Quarantine organisms

A total of 205 samples were collected and sent to the various laboratories within the Plant Health Department for further analysis.

Registration of Palm Trees

During 2009 a new legal notice, LN 42/2009 was issued, making it obligatory for anyone having palm trees to register them with the Plant Health Department. A total of 3,826 applications from the general public were received. The total number of registered palm trees was 35,599 palms. Furthermore local councils had to submit the list of palm trees situated within their jurisdiction as per DLG circular dated 12 December 2008. The total number of palm trees notified by the 67 local councils was 4,964. Also government entities were obliged by OPM circular 31/2008 to register their palm trees, and a total of 46 entities submitted this information. The number of palm trees thus registered was 5,905. Due to more requests from the public who was not aware of the deadline imposed by LN 42/2009 and its amendment, a late registration was initiated by the PHD. A total of 69 late registrations were received by the end of December 2009, with a total amount of 227 palm trees being registered. All these applications were acknowledged. Besides, 304 information letters were sent to individuals by e-mail or post.

Eradication and enforcement

The surveillance of Red Palm Weevil continued during the year and there were 417 inspections, of which 355 were in private residences and 62 in public areas. During these visits, stakeholders were informed about pesticide treatment which could be utilised for control purposes. Inspections were carried out during the different stages of growth. A total of 776 palms had to be destroyed as a consequence of red palm weevil. 93 registered enforcement letters were sent to various individuals for palm removal. Five notices of removal were issued as per LN 42 of 2009.

Regarding the *Tuta absoluta*, a total of 144 destruction letters were issued and sent to producers' organisations to be submitted to their respective members.

With respect to cases of citrus trees infected with *Citrus Tristeza Virus* in San Blas/Dahlet Qorrot area under contingency, four cases were reported for prosecution. 66 trees were destroyed through an enforcement action without notice by the Plant Health Department. During this enforcement, a legal mandate made from four growers was issued against the PHD. Following a refusal of the mandate from the Gozo Court of Justice, the destruction process by the PHD continued and all trees (26) were destroyed.

Another separate case reported for prosecution by the PHD is still pending. This concerns the interception by PHD inspectors of the movement of citrus fruits with leaves. Since Malta holds protected zone status for the *Citrus Tristeza* virus, it is prohibited to move fruits that contain leaves, because these may act as agents for transmission of vectors of viral diseases.

LABORATORIES

Diagnostic Laboratories (Harmful organisms)

The diagnostic laboratories within the PHD are responsible for the detection and identification of plant diseases caused by plant pests and pathogens with special reference to Council Directive 2000/29/EC and the Plant Quarantine Act 2001. Diagnostic techniques implemented in the laboratories are in accordance with EU Directives and EPPO standards where applicable.

During 2009, the Bacteriology Laboratory participated in an Interlaboratory test on the detection of *Clavibacter michiganensis* ssp. *sepedonicus* and *Ralstonia solanacearum* in potato tubers. This interlaboratory test was organised under an EU-funded ERA-Net project EUPHRESKO (European Phytosanitary Research Coordination).

In 2009, a total of 3,315 samples were tested in the plant pathology (mycology), virology, bacteriology, entomology and nematology laboratories.

Soil and Irrigation Water Laboratory

The main aim of the soil and irrigation water laboratory is to provide an advisory service to farmers through the testing of soil and irrigation water in support of fertiliser planning and irrigation control.

In 2009, the laboratory received a total of 406 samples, of which 264 were soil samples and 142 were water samples, and conducted a total of 2,868 tests. These tests include routine analysis for soil nutrients and characteristics, as well as irrigation water quality (salinity).

Seed testing laboratory

In 2009, the seed testing laboratory of the SPMU also started to perform seed testing for purity. The number of samples received amounted to 347, and 50 tests were carried out till the end of the year. These tests are being continued.

Tissue Culture Lab (In vitro Laboratory)

Micro-propagation

- *Boston ferns*: 22 jars containing about 110 plantlets of Boston ferns were being maintained at the laboratory by the end of this year. Throughout the year, these plantlets were transferred to fresh nutrient media at prescribed intervals and were inspected daily in order to monitor any developments and to

detect problems at an early stage. 20 jars of ferns containing around 95 plants were forwarded to the glasshouse for acclimatisation.

A trial for micro-propagation of this plant (*Farfugium japonica*) was commenced. The explants were maintained in the climatic grown room and inspected daily in order to monitor any developments and to detect problems at an early stage. Regular sub-culturing was carried out and the explants produced roots, however an attempt to induce leaf formation failed.

- *African violets*: The micro-propagation of African violets started in April 2009. The plantlets have multiplied and are continuing to multiply successfully. The plantlets were sub-cultured at regular intervals. A number of these plants were transferred to another medium in plastic containers and distributed to schools during the Science and Technology festival held by MCST in November 2009. Towards the end of the year there were around 98 jars containing approximately 700 plants in the laboratory. 66 jars containing around 1,034 plantlets of such species were forwarded to the glasshouse for acclimatisation.
- *Tulips*: The literature review on different media formulations for the root production of tulips was continued, as the plantlets failed to produce roots. Following further sub-culturing it was noted that 4 plants had produced roots on a particular medium. These 4 plants were then transferred to compost for an acclimatisation trial in different types of containers. The remaining plantlets were sub-cultured onto multiplication or rooting medium at regular intervals as part of the experimentation programme.
- *Orchids*: Plantlets of *Spiranthes spiralis* and *Barlia robertiana* continued to multiply satisfactorily during this year. 74 jars containing 2, 5, or 16 plantlets of various species of Maltese orchids were available at the laboratory at the end of the year. 89 and 170 plantlets of *S. spiralis* and *B. robertiana* respectively were transferred to the glasshouse for acclimatisation. A number of trials on the medium to be used for the acclimatisation of orchids have been carried out in order to determine which mixture would be the best. During the year, 2 of the plants produced flowers while in vitro and upon comparison to pictures, it was determined that the plantlets most probably belong to *Ophrys bombyliflora* rather than the *Barlia robertiana*. An attempt on the acclimatisation of *Spiranthes spiralis* was carried out using different types of substrate and containers.

Sanitation of local varieties

Work on a trial on the sanitation (somatic embryogenesis) of local citrus was commenced. The available publications were reviewed thoroughly and standard operating procedures were drafted. A work plan on the clonal and sanitary selection was established and a number of orchards where perpetual lemon trees are being cultivated were visited for collection of flower buds to be used as explants. Samples were collected from a perpetual lemon tree infected with the citrus tristeza virus in the Maltese Islands. The explants are being maintained in the growth room and callii have been formed however no further development was noted. The possibility of carrying out sanitation of local trees of various species has been sought.

Oenology Laboratory

The oenology laboratory was dismantled and items transferred from the Viticulture Section to the AS&RD laboratories. This laboratory will begin functioning again once the appropriate site for its installation is identified and the necessary staff is recruited and trained.

ADVISORY AND INFORMATION SERVICES

The Plant Health Department continued to assist farmers and the general public on a number of phyto-sanitary issues. Most queries are resolved by the telephone, others were investigated on site and samples taken when necessary.

In addition, the Department has organised a number of meetings and informative seminars in 2009 for stakeholders as part of awareness and information campaigns, as indicated in the list hereunder.

Seminar	Date	Stakeholders
Red Palm Weevil Seminars by Prof Porcelli at FCCS premises, Ta' Qali	February 2009	Local councils, production centres (nurseries) and the general public
<i>Tuta absoluta</i> at Pitkali markets	9 October 2009	Growers
Citrus Tristeza Virus – Gozo	15 February 2009	Citrus Growers
Tomato Growers for Processing (Malta)	12 November 2009	Tomato Growers and Processors, PO's.
Production and Marketing of Plant Material (Malta)	25 November 2009	Nurseries
Information on <i>Tuta absoluta</i> (Gozo)	27 November 2009	Tomato Growers, PO's

In 2009 the Department published a number of press releases as indicated hereunder:

No	Date	Topic addressed
187	6 February 2009	<i>Ippublikat Avviż Legali Dwar il-Kontroll fuq il-Bumunqar l-Ahmar</i>
477	19 March 2009	<i>Linji Gwida dwar il-qtugħ tal-friegħi tal-palm fl-okkażjoni ta' Hadd il-Palm u l-Festi marbuta mal-Għid, b'rabta mal-prevenzjoni tal-firxa tal-Bumunqar l-Ahmar</i>
953	30 May 2009	<i>Jintemm kors ta' tahriġ fuq il-kontroll tal-Bumunqar l-Ahmar</i>
905	25 May 2009	<i>Tagħrif dwar it-Tomato Leafminer (Tuta Absoluta)</i>
1081	23 June 2009	Department of Agriculture notice regarding Tuta Absoluta pest
1203	13 July 2009	Plant Health Department notice regarding cutting of Palm Trees for 'Kannizzati'

The Plant Health Department participated in the Science and Technology festival organised by the Malta Council for Science and Technology between 23 and 29 November 2009.

Two University students, reading for a BSc degree in Biology and Chemistry, were hosted at the Laboratories at the Plant Biotechnology Centre from 13 July to 11 September 2009. The students were involved in the micropropagation of ornamental plants at the Tissue culture laboratory and in the testing of plant bacteria and viruses at the Virology/Bacteriology Laboratory. A French student from the LaSalle Institut Polytechnique was trained at the PHD from 20 July to 4 December 2009. She was involved in the testing of plant bacteria, viruses and fungi at the Diagnostic Laboratories, sampling carried out by the Diagnosis and Control Unit in connection with obligatory surveys and in the micropropagation of African violets at the Tissue Culture Laboratory.

COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION

The Plant Health Department took part in the evaluation of the Community Plant Health Regime commissioned by DG SANCO and being conducted by the Food Chain Evaluation Consortium, and submitted questionnaires related to general costs of implementing the regime, specific costs, and general evaluation.

In 2009, the Department initiated the consultation with respect to the draft legal notice on the implementation of the Potato Cyst Nematode Directive.

PROJECTS

In 2009 the PHD was informed that insufficient funds were available to support the FP7 project ADOPT: Advanced On-Site Detection of Invertebrate Pests in Plants that had been favourably evaluated by the EU Commission in the first phase of evaluation. On the basis of the proposal's position in the resulting ranking lists, and given the budgetary limits, the Commission services were not in a position to proceed with negotiations for a Grant Agreement on this proposal. The Department had submitted its application to participate in this project as a partner having specific tasks in the workpackage programme.

In January 2009, the Department submitted its nominations for the national members and substitutes of the COST project FA0807 Integrated Management of Phytoplasma Epidemics in Different Crop Systems.

In March 2009, the project proposal for PHYTOGREEN was delivered to the Joint Technical Secretariat of the Med Programme (Europe in the Mediterranean). The PHD confirmed its intention to participate as project partner in this project for the Application of innovative models for eco-friendly phytosanitary

management of urban green areas to protect city-dwellers' health. To date, the outcome of the selection process has not been communicated.

In March, the Plant Health Department submitted its intention to participate in the proposed draft COST action – Standardisation and Harmonisation of Detection, Diagnosis, Monitoring and Control Protocols for citrus tristeza and huanglongbing agents and their main vector species (*T. citricidus*, *D. Citri*, *T. erytraea*) about the transfer of knowledge on Citrus tristeza and Huanglongbing, two important citrus diseases.

In 2009, work on the initial phases of an FP7 funded project *Valorisation of the indigenous vine varieties of Malta: Conservation, Assessment and Innovation* was carried out by the Oenology Research Section in conjunction with the Institute of Agriculture at the University of Malta. Technical support through site inspections, sampling and data interpretation was given to vine growers.

In October, a project proposal entitled *Preservation and enhancement of the genetic heritage of fruit tree species of the Mediterranean Sea Basin – FruitGerm* - was submitted by the Agricultural Research Centre of Egypt for funding under the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) of the CBCMED (Cross Border Cooperation in the Mediterranean) under priority 1. The Plant Health Department is one of the participating partners in the proposed project, that shall be implemented in Egypt, Greece, Lebanon, Malta, Syria and Italy and that has duration of 36 months. The main activities in the proposed project are the development, harmonisation, and implementation of common innovative protocols for the selection, mapping, characterisation, conservation and use of native fruit tree species; the definition of a common innovative tool for the data management of native fruit tree species genotypes; and the consolidation of the public-private Mediterranean Network for the enhancement and use of fruit tree species.

In October, the PHD sent an expression of interest for participation in EUPHRESKO II as an Observer Partner. As an observer partner, the PHD had already been involved in the EUPHRESKO ERA-NET and had participated in the Europe-wide workshop on Building and Influencing Trans-national Phytosanitary Research Strategies for Europe, and in the Ring Test on Diagnostic Methods for *Clavibacter michiganensis* ssp. *Sepedonicus* and *Ralstonia solanacearum*.

Through a Twinning Light Project *Auditing the Authorities represented within the Food Safety Commission*, an official from the PHD received local training in internal audits by two experts and also participated in a study visit in internal audits in Northern Ireland.

PLANT BIOTECHNOLOGY CENTRE MANAGEMENT

Facilities Management

Routine work such as the cleaning of pots, application of pesticides and fertilisers was carried out in the glasshouses, screen houses, shade house, mother block and outdoor areas. Routine works for the up-keeping of the PBC grounds were carried out. These included weeding and rotovation of fields and general cleaning and maintenance of the premises.

Rootstocks and ornamental plants were continually cared for and regular applications of insecticides were necessary to control sciarid flies and other insects. Preventative drenching with fungicides was carried out to avoid soil borne fungal diseases and fertilisers were applied during irrigation. Acclimatised rootstocks were transferred to the shade house for hardening and certification. Conventional propagation of various ornamental plants was also carried out within the glass house.

A continuous production of herbaceous indicator and indexing plants for virus diagnosis was carried out throughout the whole year. Apart from the regular herbaceous plants, pumpkins, cucumbers, tomatoes, aubergines, fava beans and others were used as indicator plants. Works includes regular sowing, transplanting, repotting, irrigation and spraying with pesticides for the control of insects pests such as

sciarid flies, thrips, whiteflies and red spider mites. Old material was discarded. Hygiene, such as cleaning of benches and floors was carried out. A stock of mother plants for the collection of seeds was maintained.

The ornamental and endemic plants are being maintained in the 3rd compartment and required regular irrigation and spraying. Commercial propagation of spider plants, *Myrtus*, *Cremnophyton*, *Helichrysum* and other ornamental plants was carried out.

The plastic house was mainly used for the production and upkeep of herbaceous indicator Mother Plants which are used for seed collection. These plants were given regular care. Maintenance work was also carried out on some of the benches.

Regular irrigation, application of pesticides and drenching with fungicides for the control of insect pests was carried out. Other work included organisation of plants and weeding. Plants were regularly cared for and required irrigation, weeding and spraying for insect pests. The stonefruits and vines were pruned and organised and slow release fertilisers were applied.

Sale and Donation of Plants

In 2009 the Plant Health Department's Facilities Management and Maintenance Unit sold a total of 90 plants. In addition, a total of 646 plants, including 60 olive rootstocks, were donated to various entities of the Ministry and non-governmental organisations.

Participation in Fairs

The PHD had participated in several fairs organised by MRRA and these include the *Festa tat-Tigieg*, *Tal-Qaqoċċ*, Echofest, *Tal-Majjal*, *tat-Tonn*, *tal-Għasel*, Il-Buskett and also at the Trade Fair. The total number of plants sold during these fairs amounted to 174.

OPERATIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE

Human resources development

A number of PHD officials attended courses, both locally and abroad, in a wide range of topics, including management and leadership skills, EU affairs, and ICT skills. In addition, the Plant Health Department organised a number of topic-specific training sessions, such as the use of dendrosurgery and endotherapy in the control of the Red Palm Weevil, and mycology techniques in diagnosis and control. Inspectors from the Surveillance and Inspectorate Unit continued to participate in the Better Training for Safer Food Initiative of the DG Health and Consumers of the EU.

On 27 October a team building workshop was organised by the Staff Development Organisation through an initiative of the Plant Health Department. Media Co-op animated the workshop for which all Department staff attended.

Procurement

In 2009 the Plant Health Department through the Department of Contracts issued a tender for the supply and commissioning of a heavy duty palm tree shredder for the shredding of infected palm trees. The tender proposals received by the closing date (11 November 2009) were evaluated and a recommendation was made to the Department of Contracts.

On 3 December 2009, a request for information was issued on the Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS) for the Plant Health Department in order to help in the automation of laboratory activities.

An Expression of Interest for the provision of monitoring services (phytosanitary diagnosis and control of *Tuta absoluta* – tomato leaf minor moth) to the Plant Health Department was drafted by the Department and published by the Procurement and Contracts Section on 27 November 2009.

Missions

In 2009, the Plant Health Department participated in two missions of the Food and Veterinary Office of DG SANCO. The first mission DG (SANCO)/8109/2009 FVO General Review Mission to Malta took place from 6 to 10 July, for the purpose of updating the Country Profile. In addition to reviewing the description of responsibilities of competent authorities, the mission reviewed in detail the state of play on all outstanding recommendations from previous FVO inspections in Malta. Following this mission, the Department submitted additional information as requested by same office by 30 October 2009. An FVO Preliminary General Audit was then held on 16 December 2009.

Audits

During 2009, the Plant Health Department had one external audit carried out, as provided by Regulation (EC) No 882/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council on official controls to verify compliance with feed and food law, animal health and animal welfare rules to verify that the required system of control is in place and is being effectively implemented. The audit by MSA was carried out on 22 April 2009 and involved onsite witnessing of plant health inspectors in performing an inspection on third country imports. The areas assessed during the course of the visit were found to be effective.

Customer care

In 2009 the Plant Health drafted the Quality Service Charter. This Charter will serve as a declaration of the commitment to offer an excellent service to all customers. The Department also implemented a number of provisions in order to strengthen its customer care, particularly in relation to the provision of inspectorate and advisory services to the general public. It is expected that the Quality Service Charter shall be launched in 2010.

Green Measures

In 2009, the Plant Health Department continued implementing green measures including resource-efficient measures and waste management. Some of the water flushers at the PBC were in the latter part of the year replaced with dual flush mechanism type in order to save water. In addition, the Department's Green Leader continued raising awareness about environmental measures at the workplace, including the appropriate waste separation.

On 23 July 2009, a question and answer session was held at the PBC for all Plant Health Department employees about green measures and waste management. This session was addressed by the Ministry's green leaders and a WasteServ representative, and focused on energy efficiency, climate change and sustainable waste management.

DR MARICA GATT
Director (Plant Health)

Works Division

Office of the Director General

LEGAL OFFICE

The Ministry for Resources and Rural Affairs, the Works Division and the Services Division constantly consult the Legal Office, and request its assistance with respect to drafting of contracts, as well as in judicial proceedings before the Law Courts, in order to safeguard their interests. This led to the filing of approximately 65 judicial acts in Court during 2009 for the various departments within the Ministry, and as a result of such legal action, the Works Division recouped the sum of € 27,000.

The Legal Office assisted the Ministry and various line departments in approximately 35 cases before the Law Courts, as well as in arbitration proceedings before the Malta Arbitration Centre. It was also involved in the drafting and amendment of laws falling within the competence of this Ministry.

Advocates within the Legal Office attended a number of seminars and conferences held locally.

DOOR NUMBERING UNIT

Door numbering exercises were carried out in the following localities during 2009

Locality	Number of Streets
Hal Lija	4
Żejtun	2
Għaxaq	2
Żebbug	2
Floriana	1
Hamrun	1
Balzan	6
B'Kara	2
Gżira/San Ġwann	2
Luqa	2
M'Xlokk	8
Kalkara	1
Żurrieq	3
Gudja	1
M'Scala	2
Siggiewi	1
Kirkop	1
Total	41

The Unit carries out its work with the full co-operation of the Electoral Office, the Commissioner of Police, the Water Services Corporation, Maltapost and the local councils.

WORKS PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT UNIT

During the year, this Unit was involved in the preparation of a programme of works and in the updating of the programme in respect of various projects undertaken by the Works Division.

Restoration works at the Auberge de Castille Valletta

The general refurbishment works of the Auberge continued through 2009 and the restoration works on the first section of façade on Merchant Street was taken in hand.

Refurbishment works at the PPCD offices, St Paul's Street, Valletta

The refurbishment works on these offices was completed in 2009.

Restoration works at Villa Francija, Lija

Most of the works related to the refurbishment of this Villa were completed in 2008. However one of the main halls was still being restored through 2009. This work was completed so that the Villa is now in full official use.

Restoration/Refurbishment works in relation with the new CPRT offices, Floriana

These offices will be equipped to serve as the new quarters for the Centre for Policy Research and Training within the Office of the Prime Minister. During 2009 the works related to Block B, which were to house the administrative wing of the SDO, were completed. The works included structural alterations, complete installation of services and all finishing works.

During 2009, the necessary permits for the works on Block A, which will amongst others house the lecture halls for the SDO, were attained from MEPA and works were also taken in hand on this block.

Furthermore, the site was also cleared to make way for the proposed landscaping works and the eventual installation of an external lift/staircase to link the different areas of the premises. A MEPA application for the proposed external lift and refurbishment of Block C was also submitted.

Alternative Wind Energy

In line with Government's strategy to reduce our dependency on oil for energy generation, three sites for possible Wind Farm projects, two are on land and one off-shore, were identified. Furthermore, in order to be able to have more accurate data on the wind profile across the Maltese archipelago, it is planned to install wind monitoring masts in different locations. For this reason a number of applications have been submitted to MEPA as follows:

Temporary Wind Monitoring Masts

- 80m Mast at Aħrax tal-Mellieħa (PA 701/09)
- 30m Mast at Ħal Far Industrial Estate (PA 4498/09)

Wind Farms (Outline Development Application)

- Sikka l-Bajda l/o Mellieħa (PA 1821/09),
- Ħal Far l/o Birżebbuġa (PA 1820/09),
- Wied Rini l/o Rabat (PA 1819/09).

The permit for the installation of the wind monitoring mast at Aħrax tal-Mellieħa was approved during 2009 and the mast was also subsequently installed. The necessary studies requested by MEPA on the other applications have also been taken in hand.

RAY FARRUGIA

Director General (Works)

Works Division

Building and Engineering Department

INTRODUCTION

During 2009 the Building and Engineering Department maintained its role as the principal design arm of the Works Division, for projects originating from the Ministry for Resources and Rural Affairs and for projects originating from other Ministries and Departments.

The main projects that originated from the MRRA were landscaping projects aimed to enhance the environment and the quality of life of the local population and visiting tourists. Projects worth mentioning are Tower Road Upgrading, St Anne Square Sliema, Pjazza San Ġorġ Valletta and Ta' Qali BOV National Park (PARKS Project).

The departmental set-up for 2009 included the Design Unit incorporating the Draughting Office, Records and Archives Office and the Architectural and Engineering Office responsible for design and project management of assigned projects; Services Unit incorporating the Electrical and Mechanical Engineers Office; Quantity Surveying Unit responsible for preparation of tender documentation (Pre Contract) and measurement of works carried out (Post Contract); Land Surveying Unit responsible for carrying out land surveys and related work and Rehabilitation Project Office incorporating, Valletta Rehabilitation Project, Mdina Rehabilitation Committee and Cottonera Rehabilitation Committee responsible for monitoring of projects in these sensitive areas.

DESIGN UNIT

The following are projects executed during 2009, and projects which commenced in 2009 and are still in progress.

Projects originating from Ministry for Resources and Rural Affairs

- *St George's Square*: The project initially incorporated a one level car park beneath St George's Square. After the discovery of archaeological remains it was decided to upgrade the square only. An important decision taken was to remove parking from the square so that the open space could be enjoyed by the general public and tourists. Project includes - Laying of all relevant services, namely water, drainage, electrical services, telecommunications and sound, restoration of street enveloping facades, restoration of Main Guard clock, restoration of Main Guard Coat of arms, Installation of interactive water fountain, Installation of various light systems, Installation of WiFi, CCTV and sound system, and construction and assembly of street furniture.
- *Upper Tower Road Embellishment*: During the early part of 2009, the second phase of the embellishment of Tower Road was completed. As in the lower stretch of the same street, the walkways were widened and repaved with porfido slabs and kerbs, a new granite fountain was installed in the area in front of the HSBC Bank and a short stretch of High Street up to Tower Car Park was repaved with porfido binderis for combined pedestrian vehicular access.
- *St Anne Square Sliem Embellishment*: On 3 June, a refurbished and embellished St Anne Square, site of the former Magic Kiosk, was inaugurated. The existing majestic trees were retained and three new circular solid granite benches installed around them. Two new fountains, one with a cast iron reproduction of the Daphne statue at Balluta and the other, with ground water jets, were also erected. The materials for the

paving and retaining walls were grey granite blocks and porfido slabs. The new square seems to have immediately become a new favourite gathering spot for Sliema people and tourists alike.

- *Embellishment of Xatt Is-Sajjieda, Marsaxlokk (resident's side)*: The first phase of this project was finalised this year and extended from Immaculate Conception Street to the Church Square. This work commenced on 20 February 2008 and was finalised by mid June 2009. The works carried out included the new installation for sewer and water mains, widening of the existing pavement and all necessary infrastructural work and re-paving of this pavement consisted of porfido slabs and granite cubes
- *Embellishment of Xatt is-Sajjieda, Marsaxlokk (Phase 2)*: The 2nd phase of this project is expected to start in early January 2010 and includes the re-paving of the promenade and the church square. The road is to be re-surfaced. New benches and lamp posts are to be installed along the promenade. The Monti is to be re-located during the execution of these works.
- *Kennedy Grove Embellishment*: Though the area forms part of the Salini Park, it had still not been upgraded. The project sought to redress this. The existing footpaths were re-surfaced using imprinted concrete of a similar design to that already used elsewhere in the park. The furniture, ie. the light fittings, bins and benches installed, were also like the ones already used thus giving the area a sense of continuity. Since the area is a salt marsh, during the embellishment the land was disturbed as little as possible. Water features to complement the existing Salina Park were also designed and installed.
- *Widening of Pedestrian Sidewalk in St George's Bay, Paceville*: In order to link the bay to the central nightspots in Paceville and also to St Julians Bay, the pedestrian sidewalk at St George's Bay, Paceville was widened using materials which were used in the original project ie. black and grey concrete paving blocks
- *Xghajra Promenade*: This project, which was begun in 2008 and completed in the third quarter of 2009, involved the embellishment of the coast road along the picturesque village of Xghajra. Works on the promenade consisted in the widening of the walkways, the provision of ample parking and other general amenities.
- *Santa Ubaldesca Square, Paola*: This project, started and completed throughout the current year, involved the upgrading of the square in front of the church dedicated to Santa Ubaldesca in Paola. The works included the re-alignment of the roads surrounding the square, the construction of the church parvis, and a small garden with landscaping, fountain and street furniture. A war-time shelter has been uncovered and incorporated in the design scheme.
- *Santa Venera Church Parvis*: This project, which was started in 2008 and completed earlier this year, included the construction of office space, the paving of Church Parvis and the grand staircase. The main construction material used is local limestone 'fuq il-fil' and granite paving slabs.
- *Construction of Parking Area at Triq il-Karrijiet Rabat*: This project consisted in the construction of a parking area in the area in front of the Roman Villa. The area in question was a derelict and disused site. Although it was used as a parking area, the parking was haphazard. The project included paved areas which are meant for social interaction. As the site is of utmost archaeological importance, the interventions had to be reversible and minimal. For this reason, trees were not planted in the ground but in large timber flowerpots.
- *Rehabilitation of Buskett Gardens*: The Buskett project involved the rural and landscape rejuvenation and rehabilitation of Buskett gardens. No physical structural alterations were intended to be carried out in the buildings and the walls and no additional structures were erected, although the dangerous retaining walls were carefully rebuilt, some at a considerable expense. All works were carried out using building materials and construction techniques which are akin to those existing.
- *Rehabilitation of Various Beaches*: The project consisted in the improvement of various facilities and infrastructural works in various public beaches and coastal areas. The areas involved were Qawra, Bugibba, Sliema and St Julians.
- *Mdina*: Works on the EEA project *Design and Consolidation of unstable terrain and Restoration of historic ramparts underlying Council square, Mdina*, funded under EEA/Norway Funding Programme have been successfully completed and the project was also allocated additional funding after it was very well received by the funding nations. The project consisted in the drilling of a number of underground piles, casting in place of capping beams, injection grouting for soil stabilisation and fracture treatment, insertion of anchor bars and prestressed tendons so as to arrest the ongoing movement.

- *Wind Monitoring Wind Mast Hal Far*: The project consists in the installation of 40m wind monitoring mast at Hal Far and the strengthening of existing masts to house wind measuring equipment.
- Projects originating from other Ministries and Departments
- *Marsa Police Station*: Structural repair work was carried out at the Marsa Police Station to reinstate building after a number of structural failures were noted.
- *Communication Tower Hal Far*: The project consisted in the refurbishment and strengthening of an existing 12m communication tower to accommodate additional communication accessories. Structural modifications were carried out on the roof of Lyster barracks to accommodate tower.
- *Construction of Office/Classroom for the Institute of Tourism Studies, St Julian's*: This project consisted in the construction and finishing of an office/classroom at the Institute of Tourism Studies. It was started and completed in 2009. Easement and Works in Culvert to alleviate the problem near St Luke's Hospital Parking. A culvert in third party property was constructed by owners of the property on behalf of the Pieta Local Council in order to alleviate the problem of Alfred Craig Street (near St Luke's hospital parking).
- *Investigation of Roof Structure of Ta' Xbiex Church*: The main roof slab was investigated. The existing soffit concealing the underside of this slab was first removed. Investigations resulted with the awareness that the slab was in a dangerous state and this was declared unsafe. A MEPA permit was then granted for its removal and reconstruction. The roof slab will be removed and afterwards rebuilt.
- *Demolition and reconstruction of concrete slabs and masonry columns at Luqa Barracks (Sergeant's Mess) (OPM)*: A MEPA approval was granted for the demolition and reconstruction of concrete slabs and masonry columns at Luqa Barracks (sergeant's mess) after visual and manual investigation.
- *AFM Maritime Base*: A comprehensive tender has been prepared for services, finishes and fixtures for the newly constructed AFM Maritime Base Administrative Headquarters at Haywharf, Pieta.

Projects currently at design stage, originating from the MRRRA

- *Erection of Fish Market*: It is proposed that the present Valetta fish market be transferred to Marsa and a site near the abattoir has been identified. This extensive project involves the design and construction of a fish market including all masonry, concrete and finishing works and the procurement of specialised machinery and equipment such as freezers and chillers. A state of the art fish market is envisaged.
- *Mosta Parvis – Replacement of Parapet Wall to Mosta Church Parvis*: Works will commence in early 2010 to replace the parapet wall which is in a derelict condition. The design of the parapet wall will be similar to existing. Two decorative fountains will be installed at the level of the walkway in front of the Church Parvis.
- *Delimara National Park: Ponta ta' Delimara* accessed via Triq Delimara is the proposed site for the establishment of a park consisting predominantly of a large scale reforestation project. The intervention is expected to be minimal with few new structures. It is proposed to improve access to beaches, upgrade existing military structures, rehabilitate existing pathways, create a heritage trail and other works.
- *Garden and Play Area – Qui-si-sana, Sliema*: Drawings, model, 3d perspective and walk through have been prepared. The project involves an upgrading of the existing garden and play area, which is to be a sunken space divided into areas according to different age groups. All around there will be turf for people to lie on, relax etc.
- *Embellishment of Qui-si-sana Promenade*: The promenade will extend the already embellished promenade which stretches all the way from St Julians up to Għar id-Dud. The embellishment will follow the same lines taken on those areas. The road alignment will be modified due to the widening of the roadway which is being proposed by ADT.
- *Upgrading of Triq Santu Wistin Rabat and Vjal Santu Wistin Rabat*: Designs were carried out to pave with natural paving materials these important roads in the historical area of Rabat. Lava material will be used and works will include the upgrading of existing services.
- *New Sports School – St Andrews*: Design proposals were prepared to convert school in Pembroke to a Sports School including all the related facilities and amenities.
- *Upgrading of Steps in Angelo Pullicino Street, St Julians*: Designs were prepared for the upgrading of these steps in view that they are presently in a bad state of repair. Works include construction of flower beds, paving of staircase and installation of lighting.

- *New Residential Units for the homeless – Mrabat Street, Sliema:* Design proposals were prepared to convert an existing house into residential units for the homeless to be run by Salesians Brothers. The project caters for eight self-catering residential units with all supportive facilities.
- *Fortini Car Park:* The project consists in the provision of an underground car park for circa 200 cars below the Fortini football ground together with the upgrading of the existing football ground and area. This project is related to the pedestrianisation project of the Colaccio area.
- *Sports and Community Recreational Area – Vjal ir-Rihan, San Ġwann.:* The project will include a five-a-side football pitch, showers for athletes and officials and a public garden including a children's play area.
- *Church Parvis – Attard:* Designs are in hand to upgrade Attard Church Parvis.
- *Wied Ghomor Embellishment – St Julians:* The landscaping project will enhance area in question which is presently in a shabby state.
- *Caravan Sites:* Applications were submitted for MEPA approval for the construction of caravan sites at il-Prajjet l/o Mellieha and Żonqor Point, Marsascula.
- *Heritage Trail – Żonqor Point, Marsascula:* Designs are in hand for the embellishment of this area which will include a heritage trail to highlight the existing coastal fortifications.
- *Mdina:* Works on the EU project Consolidation of Terrain and Historic Ramparts Mdina under ERDF funds are underway, after the adjudication of Service tender for the provision of geotechnical engineering consultancy and project management services with specific experience in ground consolidation of the fragile terrain underlying the bastion walls and historic places of the walled city of Mdina. Two other tenders namely Design and Build Contract for the Consolidation of Unstable Terrain and Restoration Works of the Historic Ramparts Underlying the Vihhena Palace Area and St Paul's Bastion at Mdina and Contract for Mdina Bastions Ground Investigation Work and Monitoring System have been awarded. Two other phases are in the pipeline, namely Consolidation of Magazine Curtain and Restoration and Consolidation of Despuig Bastion.
- *Archery Bridge Marsa Sports Complex:* The works comprise the construction of a 13m road/pedestrian bridge. The site conditions necessitate a bridge with a very low structural depth and a flat soffit. A structural steel through Girder bridge can provide this requirement and it is envisaged that works will be carried out by the steel section of MSD.
- *New Laboratory Plant Biotechnology Centre Lija:* The project consists of a two storey building to house chemistry laboratory, seed testing laboratory, viticulture and oenology laboratory together with the Surveillance and Inspectorate Unit and a Conference Hall within the grounds of il-Ġnien tal-Kmand. MEPA is reconsidering a request to schedule the area from grade 1 to grade 2 as the area identified is within the non-historic area of the boundary.
- *Il-Grotta Buskett:* The Plan metric and Crack pattern survey is being carried out. Remedial works will commence in 2010.
- *Skew Arch Sa Maison Gardens:* The Plan metric and Crack pattern survey is being carried out. Remedial works will commence 2010.
- *St George's Bay (Golden Mile) – Phase 2:* This project is a continuation of the embellishment of St George's Bay so that the bay and the surrounding hotels are better linked to St Julians and Sliema.
- *Ġnien Kristu Re Upgrade, Floriana:* This project is meant to upgrade this area just outside Valletta. Project is at the preliminary stages.
- *Main Car Park Upgrade, Bugibba:* This project in meant to upgrade this parking area. Project is at the preliminary stages.
- *Embellishment and Rehabilitation works at Triq Durumblat, l/o Attard:* Designs are being prepared to upgrade Triq Durumblat which is a main trunk road connecting the villages of Attard and Mosta.
- *Proposed Additional Floor for the Plant Biotechnology Centre Lija (MRRRA):* Architectural plans were drawn up and an application to MEPA has been filed. This floor is an extension of the existing laboratory. Program of works will be set once MEPA permit is issued.
- *Paying Agency New Block at L-Ghammieri Luqa (MRRRA):* A location in the Ghammieri site was earmarked for the construction of a new block designated as a Paying Agency.
- *Fortifications Information Centre Biaggio Steps Valletta ((MRRRA):* Structural analysis and design of a roof covering a large area of 23 metres X 20 metres was devised. Detailed structural drawings were drawn up and a tender was issued and adjudicated. Works on this project will start soon.

- *Installation of wind turbine/s on Ministry Block Beltissebh (MRRRA)*: Investigations were made as to the ideal position of the wind turbine/s. Structural aspects were analysed and two locations chosen.
- *Baħar iċ-Ċagħaq Recreational Area*: Designs were prepared to transform an otherwise undeveloped site into a recreational area. The proposal allows for a direct vertical access from the church parvis to the proposed garden such that the space reads as an extension of the parvis giving more prominence to the site given its central location.
- *Widening of Promenade at Ta' Xbiex Sea Front*: Designs were prepared for the widening and upgrading of a stretch of promenade along Ta' Xbiex Seafront, extending from the junction with Abate Rigord Street to Msida Church. The proposal includes the reclamation of part of the Marina and the shifting of a pontoon in order to retain the existing fairway width.
- *Upgrading of Parking - Marina Street, Pieta'*: The proposal prepared includes the opening up of a secondary street all along Marina Street to avoid access to parking from arterial road.
- *Embellishment of Area around Kiosk - Pieta'*: The proposal prepared includes paths leading to paved area around kiosk with seating and water feature.
- *Boċċi Club, Garden and Skatepark – Marsascula*: Preliminary proposals prepared include a garden with a central open space having a water feature and seating as well as a skate park and boċċi club with spaces for open air cafeterias.
- *Upgrading of Ghajn Tuffieha-Xemxija-Żebbiegħ Routes*: In order to keep this area in good condition, plans and estimates for its upgrade were drawn up. Proposed works include the replacement of rubble walls and construction of pedestrian pathways.
- *Upgrading of Marsascula Promenade*: In order to keep this area in good condition, plans and estimates for its upgrade were drawn up. Proposed works include the maintenance/repairs of railings/benches/lamp posts/walls/pavements and soft landscaping.
- *Upgrading of Sliema, St Julians, Paceville Promenades and Internal Roads (Paceville)*: In order to keep these areas in good condition, plans and estimates for their upgrade were drawn up. Proposed works include the maintenance/repairs of railings/benches/lamp posts/walls/pavements and soft landscaping.
- *Bisazza Street*: Designs are being drawn up for the pedestrianisation of this street. Since Bisazza is very close to St Anne Square, the intention is to continue with the same materials and design concepts used there. Near Plaza Shopping Mall, a small piazza with fountains and seating platforms shall be created where at present public toilets and parking choke up the area during most of the day.
- *Gżira Parish Church Parvis*: New designs for the re-paving of this church parvis were drawn up and a MEPA permit obtained.
- *M'Xlokk Embellishment*: A new paving design for the Church Square was drawn up and approved and a DNO is to be sent in to MEPA by end of this month. The materials shall be the same as those used for the first phase of the project that is the landward walkways, which was completed before this summer. The second phase, the new pedestrian walkway by the sea, shall also contain the same materials, that is porfido and granite slabs. New designs were prepared for the existing, dated canopies, which shall be replaced and also for a set of solid granite stalls, which shall be installed for use by fish vendors. The intention here is to give back to the place its typical Mediterranean, fishing atmosphere that was once so unique to it.
- *Maintenance of Pavements/Hard Landscaping at St Paul's Bay*: Pavements and hard landscaping at St Paul's Bay were inspected and an estimate for maintenance required was drawn up.

Originating from other Ministries and Departments

- *New Police Academy- Ta' Kandja l/o Siggiewi*: The work involved the finalisation of all drawings, submission of a full development application to MEPA and full follow up of the same, including subsequent changes to drawings as required by MEPA, KNPD and other entities. The work also included the preparation of three dimensional impressions of each building being proposed and for the whole project.
- *Mediterranean Conference Centre*: Studies are being carried out regarding the addition of a rooftop and suspended restaurant over the Sacra Infermeria Hall, the extension of the stage and back stage area, increasing the seating capacity of the main hall, alterations in the existing gallery together with the addition of new galleries. The back stage area is being proposed within third party properties abutting to the Mediterranean Conference Centre

- *Structural Alterations at Martin Luther King Building – ITS*: The project consists in alterations and additions in a wing of the building to house the cleaning science laboratory.
- *Recreation Yards Safi Barracks*: The design and construction of 24 courses high free standing walls to form the boundary of recreation yards for single female and married couples at the Detention Centre, Hal-Safi a project having EU funding
- *New Explosives Store for AFM Qortin Gozo*: The project consists in the design and construction of explosives store that can withstand blast loading.
- *Luqa Barracks New Training Centre*: The project consists in the conversion of barracks block F/Astra Cinema in an international training centre.
- *Hermes Block, Hal-Far*: The project consists in structural repair at Hermes Block, Hal-Far
- *Water Reservoir at Luqa Barracks*: The project consists in the construction of a 300m³ water reservoir.
- *Security Boundary Wall at Safi Barracks*: A twenty two course wall will be constructed at Safi Barracks. A tender for its construction has been issued. Construction should be completed by February 2010.
- *Girl Guides Centre*: The Girl Guides' centre has been designed and plans have been submitted to MEPA. The project consists of offices, an auditorium and a place where camping and overnight stays can take place. At this stage three way discussions between the client, MEPA and the Works Division are taking place.
- *Upgrading of car park at the Institute for Tourism Studies*: The tender for this project has been awarded and works are due to start in January 2010. The project is meant to upgrade the present parking facilities at the Institute. Works include the resurfacing of the area with some landscaping works around the perimeter.
- *Interior Design and Refurbishment of Shop 11 The Arcades, Valletta*: On behalf of WasteServ and the Water Services Corporation, the department is to refurbish a shop situated at 11 The Arcades, Valletta. Works include the total refurbishment of an existing shop, which is presently in shell form.
- *Construction of a "Heavy Vehicles" Workshop for the AFM at Hal Safi (OPM)*: Architectural plans for a heavy vehicles workshop for AFM at Hal Safi have been drawn up. Structural analysis, design and drawings required have been carried out. A MEPA application will be filed.
- *Location of a Pigs Processing Plant for KIM*: A brief is being formulated by client KIM. Afterwards, together with client and Ministry, appropriate premises for a pigs processing plant will be chosen
- *New Offices for Attorney General at 114-125, Triq id-Dejqa, Valletta*: Designs for new offices for the Attorney General have been prepared and revised drawings have been submitted to MEPA. The planning application for this development is currently being processed.

SERVICES UNIT

SERVICES UNIT – MECHANICAL

Works carried out for the Ministry for Resources and Rural Affairs

- *Saint Anne Square – Sliema* – Installation of two fountains
- *St George's Square – Valletta* – Installation of walk through fountains
- *Kennedy Grove* – Installation of three fountains
- *Ta' Qali Adventure Park* – Installation of six water features.
- *MRRRA Offices, Block B Belt is-sebh* - The rehabilitation of the block included the supply and installation of a considerable number of new air conditioners.
- *New Lift for Project House* - A new lift was installed at Project House.
- *Tower Road, Sliema* - A small fountain was constructed near the site where the Joinwell showroom once stood.
- *Sta Ubaldesca Square Paola* - A fountain was built at the centre of the redesigned square. It serves as an additional feature which helped to make this square more pleasant to be in.
- *Square in front of the Ursolini Sisters, Gwardamangia* - Irrigation equipment will be installed in the small green areas. The irrigation equipment consists of a submersible pump and piping equipment.

Works carried out for other Ministries and Departments

- *St Vincent De Paule* - Replacement of the Chillers at the Serenity Ward.
- *Local Councils Offices, Valletta* - Replacement of existing lift.
- *Auberge de Baviere* - Air Conditioning works have been completed on the second phase of this rehabilitation project. These offices were air conditioned by means of a number of VRV systems. These are the latest, energy efficient systems utilising the latest environmentally friendly refrigerant, R410a.
- *Auberge de Castille* - The air conditioning equipment of the Ambassador's Hall was replaced.
- *Law Courts – Passenger Lift* - A passenger lift used by the judiciary was replaced with a new one. The installation was completed and the new lift now conforms to the latest European norms and standards.
- *San Anton Palace* - An entire wing of offices was air conditioned. The systems used include both split type units and a VRV/F system. The individual units were used for offices whilst the VRV/F system has been installed in an area which has been divided into recording booths.
- *MEUSAC Building, OPM, Valletta* - A VRV air conditioning system was installed in the second floor.
- *Centre for Policy Research and Training, Sa Maison Hill, Floriana* - Inside Block B, a VRV air conditioning system for the offices, a split type air conditioning unit for the IT server room and a lift were installed.

Works in Progress (Design/Execution) for MRRA

- *Animal Aftercare Centre, Ta' Qali* - The ventilation system is being installed. This consists of ducting and fans to produce the required air changes in the various areas and quarters of the building. The ducting shall be of the lightweight type.
- *Fish Market, Marsa* - The Fish Market situated at Barriera Wharf was considered unsuitable for the current needs of the fishermen and hawkers, so the Ministry requested the building of a new Fish Market. Tenders for different services will be issued: sewage pumps, air conditioning, passenger, goods lifts, plumbing, pumps and hot water plant.
- *Mosta Church Parvis* - Two fountains will be constructed in front of the parvis. These will be supplied with pumps, water filtration, cleaning equipment and electric lighting.
- *Animal Welfare Centre* - An irrigation system for the watering of herbs, green paving system and trees will be installed.
- *Shopping Arcades, Valletta* - Shop no. 11 will be used by MRRA for promotion. This shop will contain 2 split air conditioners, cassette type and mechanical ventilation.
- *Qui-Si-Sana promenade and garden* - This will include two fountains, an irrigation system for the promenade vegetation and submersible pumps to pump sewage into a cess pit.
- *CMD Head Office, Beltissebh, Floriana* - A split-type, soffit cassette air conditioning unit will be installed in one of the offices of this building.

Projects under construction/design phase for other Ministries and other Departments

- *Centre for Policy Research and Training, Sa Maison Hill, Floriana* - The VRV air conditioning system for the offices of Block A is currently being installed.

SERVICES UNIT – ELECTRICAL

Works carried out for MRI/MRRA

- *St George's Square, Valletta* – Lighting of facades, balustrades and fountains, installation of rope lights on benches, programmable luminous tile system, replacement of flagpole lights, electrical installation via underground ducts, switchgear and new electricity service with facilities for activities
- *St Anne Square, Sliema* – Lighting system consisting of lamp-posts, recessed up lighters, projectors, rope lights; switchgear and new electricity service
- *Adventure Park, Ta' Qali* – Lighting system consisting of lamp-posts and floodlights, main cables and switchgear, installation in Amenity Block
- *Kennedy Grove* – decorative lamp-posts and lighting of monument
- *Pembroke Landscaping* – Lighting system consisting of lamp-posts and bollards, new electricity service

- *St Ubaldesca Church, Paola* – Illumination of façade, garden lighting system consisting of lamp-posts and recessed wall-lights, new electricity service
- “*Ursuline Sisters*” *Public Garden, Guardamangia* – Lamp-posts and recessed wall-lights, illumination of monument, new electricity service
- *Fgura Parish Church Parvis* – replacement of lamp-posts
- *Paola Parish Church Parvis* – Lighting of colonnade and portico interior by recessed up lighters
- *Pitkalija, Attard* – Feasibility study on sub-station relocation
- *Rabat* – Lighting of car park “Għalqa ta’ Kola”
- *Various other works for MRRA sections/department.*

Projects for other Ministries/Entities

- *CPRT (ex-Lotto), Floriana* – completed the distribution system and upgraded the electricity service, new electrical and ELV (data, telephone, fire alarm, security) installations in Block B (completed), Block A (in progress) and Block C, illumination of circulation and landscaped areas, also lift and underground chambers
- *Golden Mile* – lighting system consisting of decorative lamp-posts and recessed up lighters along Dragonara wall
- *Auberge de Baviere, Valletta* – electrical works in west wing, connection to sub-station completed
- *Palace, Valletta* – various works at House of Representatives and Office of the President. Centralisation exercise entering final phase.
- *San Anton & Verdala Palaces* – minor works
- *Detention Centre, Ta’ Kandja* – Replacement and centralisation of main switchgear, laying of main cable and feeder pillar for Detention Centre, installation of sub-meter
- *Addolorata Cemetery* – design for new electricity distribution system, floodlighting of chapel (partly completed) and a partial design of the cemetery extension.

VALLETTA REHABILITATION PROJECT

Projects Implemented during 2009 for MRRA

- *Bell Siege Monument* - Removal and replacement of damaged concrete, pointing of parapets, replaced damaged wooden slats of benches and repairs to hard stone steps.
- *St Catherine of Italy Church* - An Assembly of large scaffolding structures for the Italian restoration team, working on dome paintings. RPO interventions to cupola and lantern.
- *St Paul’s Shipwreck Church* - Removal of various layers applied over the years.
- *Jesuits Church* - Maintenance and restoration of small cupolas, restoration of various paintings and preventive maintenance of the church organ.
- *Republic Street* - Maintenance and repair works from South Street to Old Theatre Street.
- *Republic Street Steps* - Restoration and maintenance of hard stone steps from St Christopher Street leading to St Nicholas Street.
- *Republic Street Arcades* - Removal of protruding signs, showcases and derogatory accretions, application of rendering and lime washing.
- *Strait Street Steps* - Restoration and maintenance of hard stone steps from South street leading to Melita street.
- *St Ursula Street Steps* - Restoration and maintenance of hard stone steps from Melita Street to St John’s Street.
- *St John’s Street Steps* - Restoration and maintenance of hard stone steps from St Paul’s Street leading to Victoria Gate.
- *Valletta Waterfront* - All paving was removed and replaced with terrazzo and hard stone paving. Design included full accessibility for disabled persons.
- *St James Church* - Restoration and maintenance of the plinth all round the church. Works included rendering and lime washing with a special micro porous plaster.
- *Upper Barakka Gardens* - Reintegrated the missing structural elements to consolidate the barrel vault.

- *PAGUS Interreg Project* - Socio-economic studies and dissemination of knowledge of the fortifications of Valletta.

Projects Implemented during 2009 for other Ministries and other Departments

- *Villa Francia Restoration & Maintenance Project* - Snagging, remedial interventions and procurement of period furniture. Benefits achieved by this Project: Upgrading of Prime Minister's official venue.

Projects Under Construction/Design Phase for MRRRA

- *Ta' Liesse Project including Victoria Gate & Valletta Waterfront* - Paving of pavements and laying of new services from Valletta Waterfront to Victoria Gate. Restoration of Victoria Gate and reinstatement of ditch and bridges.
- *Cart Street* - Paving of the entire stretch of road and laying of new services.
- *Republic Street* - Paving in natural materials from Archbishop Street to St Christopher Street.
- *Old Theatre Street* - Removal of the pavement and street to read as a street in continuation with the recently formed paving in the upper part of Old Theatre Street.
- *Merchants Street* - Design of a uniform stall and the holistic design of street furniture and outdoor dining.
- *Melita Street* - Removal of the pavement and street to read as a pedestrian street in continuation with the rest of the paving in Republic and Merchants Streets.
- *St Christopher Street* - Restore the lava slabs and re-lay hard stone paving including the removal of the pavements.
- *St John's Street* - Removal of the pavement and street to read as a pedestrian street in continuation with the rest of the paving towards Old Bakery and St Paul's Streets.
- *South Street* - Removal of the pavement and street to read as a pedestrian street in continuation with the rest of the paving in Republic and Merchants Streets.
- *NSO Building* - Removal of the roofed structure and treatment of remaining roof.
- *Strait Street* - Old hard stone shall be uplifted and grouped together. The rest shall be paved with hardstone complementing the original material.
- *Spinola Palace* - Consolidation and removal of damaged parts to remove the danger and restore accordingly.
- *St Elmo Granaries* - Construction of low wall.
- *St Elmo Stores* - Selecting and cleaning the various materials and being placed on pellets.
- *St Conrad Statue, Valletta* - Original site has been identified. Statue to be placed in the corner of a building.
- *Our Lady of the Rosary Statue, Floriana* - Statue being restored to its original grandeur, including the application of gold gilding.
- *Upper Barakka Gardens & Saluting Battery* - Rigorously checking all the pipe work for any leakages and uplifting of existing turf, application of membrane and re-laying of same.
- *Valletta Master Plan* - The Master Plan and Management plan are being finalised and this will serve as a guidance for all the future projects.
- *YMCA Old Valletta Project* - 3D digital reconstruction of key buildings in Valletta and collection of archival material.
- *Republic Street Arcades* - Cleaning of the damaging layers and restore back to its patina level. Rust proofing and painting of the suspended lanterns.

Projects Under Construction/Design Phase for other Ministries and other Departments

- *Auberge de Baviere* - Consolidation of the facade on St Charles Street, using a cavity lock system. Restoration of deteriorated/damaged mouldings and stones using plastic repair and where necessary replacement of stones using blocks of the same size.
- *Pinto Clock Turret, President's Palace* - Installation of automated clock mechanism in progress. Restoration of bronze striking Jacquemarts and façade to commence in 2010.

LAND SURVEY UNIT

The Land Survey Unit carried out 133 survey downloads for 40 projects, besides setting out to all listed projects. The Land Surveying Unit catered for the following entities: MRRA (Works Division and Services Division); Health Department; Armed Forces; Malta Police Force.

- *Works Division Projects:* Sliema Tower Road Refurbishment; Birgu – Fortini Football Ground; Pieta – Sa Maison Car Park; Sliema – The Strand; Valletta - Ta' Liesse; St Julians – Balluta; Xghajra – Promenade; Sliema Tower Road; M'Scala - Żonqor Area; Sliema – Pjazza Sant Anna; Valletta – Pjazza San Ġorġ; Msida – Promenade; Pembroke – Garden; M'Xlokk – Promenade; Paola – Main Square; Żabbar – Terminus; St Julians – Spinola; Sliema – Qui Si Sana; Floriana – Beltissebh; Qawra – Car Park; Ta' Xbiex – Centre; Pembroke – Luxol; Valletta: St John Street, St Christopher Street, Republic Street, Cart Street, St Georges Square. Town/Village Main Church Squares/Parvis - Paola (Christ the King;St Ubaldesca); Mosta
- *Storm Water Projects;* Gżira – Garden Area; Naxxar – Maghtab; San Ġwann – Industrial; Luqa – Wied il-Knejjes; Lija – Mosta Road proposed Reservoir.
- *Other Projects:* Siġġiewi – Buxom Farm; Marsa – Abattoir; Rabat – Car Park; Msida – Skate park; Salina – Kennedy Grove; St Julians – Neptunes Waterpolo club.
- *Malta Police Force:* Ta' Kandja Compound
- *Armed Forces:* Luqa – Hal Far Microwave link
- *Health Department:* Paola – Sta Maria Addolorata Cemetery Underground Reservoir

QUANTITY SURVEYING UNIT

The main duties carried out by the QS Unit are:

- Preparation of budget estimates at pre-planning stage,
- Drafting of particular specifications,
- Preparation of Bills of Quantities,
- Drawing up estimates for allocation of funds for tendering purposes,
- Evaluation of tenders and drafting of technical reports,
- Giving advice regarding contractual procedure and interpretation of conditions of contract,
- Drawing up of monthly valuations for issue of interim payments to contractors,
- Re-measurement of all contract works,
- Drawing up of Final Accounts and agreeing rates for variations with contractors,
- Checking, evaluating and reporting on extra-contractual claims submitted by contractors.

Workload in 2009

During 2009 the following workload was handled by the QS Unit:

- tender documents, bills of quantities and estimates were prepared for 79 tenders with an estimated value of €2,983,348.27;
- 24 Final Bills on a re-measurement basis were prepared for completed contracts with total value of €285,495.78;
- valuation for 29 monthly interim payments to contractors during the course of contracts amounted to €816,943.37;
- 26 estimates were prepared to the value of €1,880,909.12.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Besides the workload mentioned above, staff were involved in other activities

- Advice was given to architects/engineers on contractual procedure regarding disputes with contractors and consultants.
- A managerial grade QS attends law courts in cases of litigation.

- EU funding projects for restoration works. Restoration works to Senglea spur, Senglea bastions, St Andrews bastion and lower platform, Valletta, St Andrews bastion and tenile, St John's demi-bastion and surrounding area (Valletta landfront), Mdina Bastions, Biaggio Steps, Valletta Bastions and Cospicua restoration works.
- Pre and post contract for Armed Forces of Malta, Police and Health Department.

FINAL ACCOUNTS SETTLED DURING 2009

Building and Engineering Department	€142,162.03
Construction and Maintenance Department	€48,687.71
Police Department	€65,821.76
Institute of Tourism Studies	€4,276.46
DG Services	€24,547.82
Total	€285,495.78

PAYMENTS ON ACCOUNT CERTIFIED DURING 2009

Building and Engineering Department	€495,575.05
Construction and Maintenance Department	€61,828.63
DG Services	€142,079.17
Parks – Ta' Qali	€103,261.79
Customs Department	€4,223.49
National Statistics Office	€9,975.24
Total	€816,943.37

EMANUEL BUTTIGIEG
Director (Building & Engineering)

Works Division

Construction & Maintenance Department

INTRODUCTION

The Construction and Maintenance Department (CMD) is one of the key departments within the Ministry for Resources and Rural Affairs (MRRA), with a workforce of around 720 employees that includes administrative, professional, technical and direct labour personnel. The CMD is made up of the following units:

- Restoration Unit
- Supporting Services
- Lija Workshop
- Central Districts Office

RESTORATION UNIT

The Restoration Unit is engaged in works of a specific nature, specialising in restoring monuments and public buildings that are part of our vast national heritage. Works are of a varied nature, yet these have one focus; to render to its former glory the particular monument or building in question. Interventions are classified under four classes, each distinct yet interrelated: those of maintenance, of restoration, of conservation, and those of consolidation.

Works carried out during 2009 include the following:

Restoration of façades of St Ubaldesca Church, Paola	Restoration of Ta' Qrejçqa Chapel, Qormi
Restoration of stables at Verdala Palace, Buskett	Restoration of St Barbara Bastions, Valletta
Restoration of St Publius' and St Paul's statues at St George's Church Sqr, Qormi	Restoration of sacristy and whitewashing of dome at Kappella ta' l-Angli, Żebbuġ
Restoration of St Francis' statue at St Paul's Bay	Restoration of Sa Maison Bastions (near ADT offices)
Restoration of St Anne's statue at St Anne Sqr, Sliema	Restoration of side façade of Palazzo La Salle, Valletta
Restoration of façade of Wignacourt Museum, Rabat	Restoration of Saqqajja Fountain
Restoration of the portico and façades of the National Library, Valletta	Restoration of four well openings at Maisons Demandols, Valletta
Restoration of façade, dome, lantern and belfry of Ta' Liesse Church, Valletta	Restoration of the statues of the four evangelists and balustrades at Gharghur Church Parvis
Restoration of side façade of Auberge de Castille (Merchant Str), Valletta	Restoration of the sides and back façades of St John's Co-Cathedral
Restoration of façades at Maisons Demandols	Restoration of Salvatur Bastions, Valletta

SUPPORTING SERVICES SECTION

The CMD provides other services through the Supporting Services Unit, such as waterproofing works and supplying of *franka* stone blocks from the Tar-Robba soft stone quarry situated at Mqabba, which is government owned and run by CMD. Apart from the usual cutting of *tal-franka* stone blocks, the quarry workers were also employed on extending the quarry floor by a considerable amount of square metres. This is part of an ongoing process to render the quarry area usable for the production of stone. The Waterproofing Section covered around 2,690 square metres of waterproofing membrane on various departments and other government-owned premises. Materials issued from Tar-Robba Quarry during 2009 were the following:

Material	Qty
<i>Blokki Kbar (2'x3'x4')</i>	446
<i>Blokki Kbar (1'x3'x4')</i>	136
<i>Kantun tas-6", 7" and 9"</i>	49,123
<i>Slabs (different sizes)</i>	5,712
<i>Vazi (different sizes)</i>	3,146

LİJA WORKSHOP

The Lija Workshop carries out various iron works including railings and benches in connection with the various ongoing projects being executed by this Department. Works carried out by the Lija Workshop were the following:

Manufacturing and installation of 630 metres of hand railings	Manufacturing and fixing in position of wooden benches and picnic tables for various projects in different localities
General maintenance of all wooden apertures at Villa Francia, Lija	Ancillary steel/timber works were also carried out which included iron grids, timber/steel gates, wooden/iron doors, scaffolding and hoarding

CENTRAL DISTRICTS OFFICE

The Central Districts Office carries out various projects and works such as embellishment and maintenance works on behalf of various entities including ministries, government departments and the local councils.

Works carried out by the Central Districts Office (CDO)

The Districts Section carried out works which were requested by local councils, various government departments and the MRRRA. The works consisted mainly of laying of new pavements, reinstatement of several other pavements, embellishment works and upkeep of roads and gardens, patching up of primary and secondary road surfaces using the cold mix system, cleaning of water carrying canals, building of walls, and various maintenance works on government-owned non-residential tenements; these works were requested by the Estates Management Department.

The main projects undertaken by CDO during 2009 were the following:

Rehabilitation works at Buskett Gardens	Upgrading of M'Xlokk Promenade
Embellishment works at Qawra and Sliema Promenades	Reconstruction of a broken segmental pediment at the niche of Christ the Redeemer, M'Xlokk
Embellishment works at St George's Bay Promenade	Upgrading of Xghajra Promenade
Embellishment works at Kennedy Grove, Qawra	Upgrading of Tower Rd and Bisazza Str, Sliema
Refurbishment of Waterpolo Pitch, St Julians	Refurbishing works at St Anne Square, Sliema
Embellishment works of open space at Triq Napuljun Tagliaferro, Pembroke	Construction of the Animal After-care Centre, Ta' Qali
Paving works at Paola Parish Church Parvis	Refurbishing works at St George's Square, Valletta
Paving works at St Venera Parish Church Parvis	Reinstatement of culverts at Racecourse Str, Marsa
New balustrades for Mgarr Parish Church Parvis	Masonry works at Triq il-Fieres, Kirkop
Reconstruction/repair of various rubble walls at Maghtab	Refurbishing works at ex-Government School, Fawwara icw Centre for Education Environmental Research
Paving works at Triq l-Assedju l-Kbir, Floriana	Building of wall at St Thomas Bay, M'Scala
Embellishment works at Santa Ubaldesca Church Parvis, Paola	Paving works at Fgura Parish Church Parvis (Phase 2)
Construction/demolition works on the ex-Deutsche Welle Building at Xrobb l-Ghaġin, Delimara in connection with a Visitor's Park	Decorative stone works at Ċentru Hidma Soċjali,, St Venera
Construction of concrete platform at Triq ix-Xarolla, Żurrieq	Construction of culverts sides and fixing of iron grids at Haġar Qim Qrendi
Reconstruction of rubble walls at Mtarfa, Gharghur, Żebbuħ	Demolishing and replacing of bollards at Sa Maison near Gozo Ferry
Reconstruction of boundary walls at Marsa, St Julians, St Paul's Bay and Attard	Various patching works at Food Market Pitkali Ta' Qali, M'Scala, Marsa, Msida and Floriana

Works on steps to Casa Notabile, Saqqajja Hill, Mdina	Construction of boundary wall at Triq il-Labour, Marsa
Refurbishing works at MRRRA offices	Reinstatement of pavement of Triq iż-Zurrieq, Safi
Completion of works at tal-Pluviera Sant'Anġlu, Birgu	Reinstatement of pavement of Triq William Lassell, Fgura
Refurbishing works at Mosta Health Centre	Construction of BMX Track at Pembroke
Reinstatement of pavement at Triq Lija, Żabbar	Reinstatement of pavement at Sqaq San Martin, Żurrieq
Works on various football/sports ground including Dingli, Attard, Pembroke and Mellicha	Construction of new parking area at Ghalqa ta' Kola, Rabat ifo Roman Villa
Various maintenance works on the following Promenades : Buġibba, Qawra, St Paul's Bay, Xemxija, Mellicha Bay, Ċirkewwa, Ghajn Tuffieha, Ġnejna, Sirens, Sliema, St Julians, M'Scala, B'Bugia, Żurrieq, St Thomas Bay and Xghajra	Maintenance works carried out in various localities including 2,360 metres of kerbs, 2,200 sq m of pavement repairs, 5,095 sq m of masonry and rubble wall repairs, 350 sq m of boundary fencing, repairs of 105 bus shelters. Maintenance works were also carried out to garden furniture in public areas.

Works carried out in non-residential government-owned tenements were the following:

Replacement of part of roof at 62, St Christopher Str, Valletta	Repair of concrete structure of Belvedere, Triq La Vallette, Vittoriosa
Replacement of part of roof at Customs Enforcement Unit, Lascaris	Major repairs to Garage No 5, Vincenzo Bugeja Str, Ta' Paris
Replacement of water tanks at Chinese Residence, Hal Far	Repairs to Garage No 1, Triq il-Knisja, Paceville
Removal of danger at 61, South Str, Valletta	Replacement of beam in Garage No 4, Triq fuq il-Blat, Qormi
Checking of beams at 38, Flat 3, South Str, Valletta	

PAUL CINI

Deputising Director (Construction and Maintenance)

Services Division

Office of the Director General

INTRODUCTION

Apart from the Manufacturing & Services Department, and the Cleansing Services Department, the other Units falling directly under DG Services are the SD's Administration and Financial Control Unit, the Building Regulations Office (BRO), the Marine & Storm Water Unit, the Valley Management Unit, the Architectural Consultancy Services Unit, the Occupational Health & Safety Unit, the Library, the Premises Maintenance Unit and the Quality Assurance Unit.

ADMINISTRATION & FINANCIAL CONTROL UNIT

Although the workload of this Unit has steadily increased throughout 2009 especially due to the retirement of a clerk and the increased activity on the part of the BRO in implementing the program for the certification of energy performance of buildings and other matters related to the introduction of new building regulations, the majority of targets that had been set were met. This Unit which is composed of two clerks, an EO and a Principal, keeps the DG's Office inventory, record of sick and vacation leave together with the daily attendance notifications for fifty two employees, and takes care of the inventory, financial transactions, and backup for initiatives undertaken by the other units within the DG's Office, such as the holding of courses for energy assessors, talks and meetings held by the OH&S Unit. One of the officers also acts as the green leader for the Office. During 2009, transactions done by this Unit for the provision of services and materials amounted to around €120,000 and some 2,500 files were processed.

PREMISES MAINTENANCE UNIT

This Unit carried out regular cleaning and maintenance of the Projects House and all external areas which house the Ministry in Floriana. During 2009 it undertook a general upkeep programme in Projects House together with the finishing of a hall that can house meetings of up to 80 participants and the re-tiling in wooden parquet of a large seminar room. It also carried out the demolition work of a steel shed and a building that were an eyesore and not being used. This Unit takes care of providing logistical support for functions which use the large hall and seminar rooms in the basement of Projects House.

BUILDING REGULATIONS OFFICE (BRO)

Implementation of the Energy Performance of Buildings (EPB) Directive

During 2009, work by this Office was primarily focused on the implementation of the provisions dealing with the transposition of the EU Directive concerning the Energy Performance of Buildings. A tender was prepared and issued in order to establish a standard methodology for calculating the energy performance and CO₂ emissions of Maltese dwellings such as, terraced houses, maisonettes, flats and detached houses. Together with the methodology, a contract was awarded for the development of a software program to enable Assessors of Energy Performance of Buildings to calculate the energy performance of the mentioned buildings and be able to issue an Energy Performance Certificate. Architects and Building Services Engineers, who can qualify as Energy Performance of Buildings Assessors, need to attend a specific course that is approved by the Malta Resources Authority prior to starting issuing EPB certificates. To this end, and in order to ensure the quality of certificates that are expected to be issued, the BRO is

organising a number of courses for these assessors. Up to the end of 2009, ten courses were held and 94 participants qualified to be registered. Concurrently with the mentioned software, an IT system was also developed for the backend administrative work and the online registration of certificates through the e-government portal. This system is presently being tested and is expected to be put into operation in the beginning of 2010. A memorandum of understanding was also entered into with the Malta Resources Authority to enable the BRO to monitor and enforce the implementation of *Minimum Requirements for Energy Performance of Buildings* and also the issue of *EPB certificates*. Discussions were also continued with the Building Research Establishment of the UK on a proposal for the adaptation to Malta's requirements of the methodology and software known as iSBEM which is used in the UK for calculating the energy performance of non-residential buildings. Such software is an essential tool for the issue of *EPB certificates* for non-residential buildings.

The DG and a member from BRO are also participating in the *Concerted Action II* project that was specifically set up under the *Intelligent Energy Europe* programme to help Member States in the implementation of the Directive. During 2009 two plenary meetings, one in Prague and another in Berlin were held. During these meetings several topics of technical, legal and administrative nature on matters concerning the Directive are discussed.

Other Work and Initiatives by BRO

During the summer months, BRO again recruited a number of university students who carried out research, and surveyed a number of government-owned buildings in connection with a project for the provision of space for the installation of *Renewable Energy Sources* on the roof of these premises.

Work on amending the Building (Price Control) Act, the Bill on the Registration of Building Tradesmen and new Building Regulations and the regulations to safeguard third party property during excavation, demolition and construction works consisted mainly in the holding of public consultation meetings and the preparation of the final drafts. The Bill was also put on the table of the House of Representatives.

Officers from the BRO also took part in committee meetings and other initiatives of the Building Industry Consultative Council, the Department of Health General Services Board, and Malta Standards Authority technical boards on Euro codes, and Recycling of Building Materials. The DG participated in meetings of the Commission's Energy Demand Management Committee, an Officer from BRO participated in a study commissioned by the EC's DG Enterprise and Industry on *Future Qualifications and skills in the Construction Industry*, and another Officer from BRO is a member of the Masons Board which examines candidates that apply for a Masons' licence.

The BRO also provided support to the Ministry's EU Affairs Directorate on matters dealing with the recasting of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive, matters dealing with the Free Movement of Services, Mutual Recognition of Qualifications and Education and Training in the Field of Architecture.

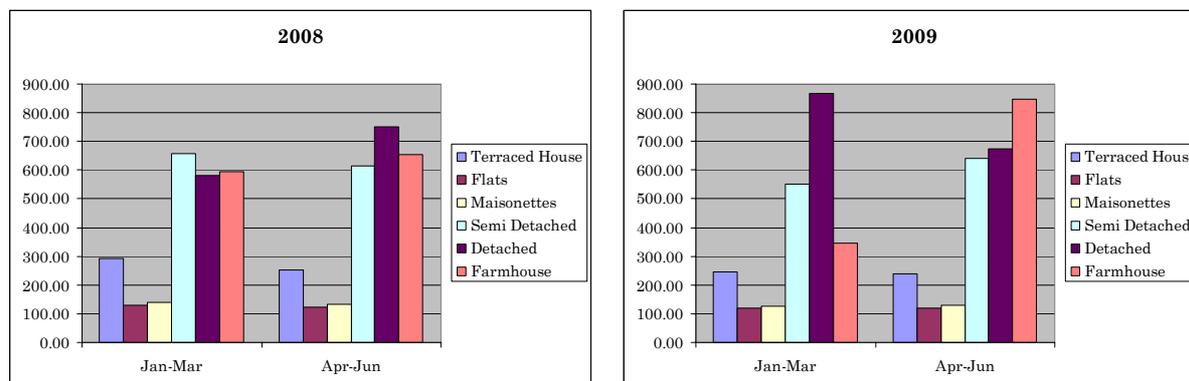
CE Marking of Lift Installations

The unit responsible for market surveillance of lift installations within the BRO carried out the scrutiny of a substantial number of MEPA applications to determine possible new lift installations in Malta and Gozo and made around 50 site inspections per week to check on the progress of such installations and see that proper CE marking is carried out. The information that was gathered was incorporated in the BRO's database on lift installations that have been installed since July 2002. Up to the end of 2009, some 500 lifts were listed in this database.

Market Prices of Buildings

Information on the fluctuation of prices in the domestic property market continued as in previous years. This exercise had however to be stopped in mid-year due to unforeseen circumstances that resulted in staff

shortage. This information is taken from adverts in the local papers and logged into the Division's database that has been built up for the past seven years. The following charts give an indication of the fluctuations that occurred during the first six months of 2008 and the first six months of 2009.



QUALITY ASSURANCE UNIT

The performance of contractors that worked for or gave services to the Works Division and Services Division throughout 2009 continued to be monitored. This was done by logging into the SD's database the quality of service mark that contractors obtain through the evaluation of the completion reports that are drawn up by the respective officer in charge of each contract that is awarded and is referred to the Unit. During 2009 only 20 reports were referred to the Unit.

Award of overall rating in running the contract						
	A	B	C	F	Nil	Total
Environment 1	0	1	0	0	0	1
Services 3	2	0	1	0	0	3
Restoration 2	2	0	0	0	0	2
Works 6	3	2	0	1	0	6
Electrical & Mechanical 2	1	1	0	0	0	2
Supplies 6	1	5	0	0	0	6
	9	9	1	1	0	20

The Unit continued with its work of sampling, and coordinated the testing of materials and products that are used in projects carried out by the Ministry. These consisted in 192 set of concrete tests, 15 set of tests on concrete paving blocks, 9 set of tests on asphaltting works, 9 tests on coated stone, 6 tests on hollow concrete blocks, 4 set of tests on concrete kerbs, 7 tests on *porfido* and hard stone paving slabs, 3 plate bearing tests on roadwork and 5 sets of core cuts. It also carried out work on the preparation and vetting of period contracts for the purchase of building material.

HEALTH & SAFETY UNIT

During 2009, the Unit made 190 inspections on various sites of work and issued the complimentary reports and risk assessments associated with these inspections. The Unit also made three specific and detailed Risk Assessments, one for the lifts section of the Manufacturing & Services Department, one for the maintenance section of the Department of Agriculture in Ghammieri and one at the Civil Abattoir. Twenty incidents that occurred to various employees within the Ministry were investigated, analysed and reported upon. The Unit organised also four meetings for the Health & Safety representatives of the various sections and departments within the Ministry during which various problems of health and safety were brought up for discussion and action to remedy outstanding matters was initiated.

In collaboration with the Chamber of Professional Engineers, the Unit held a course for drivers of *Mechanical Elevated Working Platforms*, and another for *Crane Operators*. In collaboration with the St John's Ambulance Brigade it also organised two courses on *Basic First Aid* and a number of sessions with

employees from the Cleansing Services Department on *best practices in the work of grass cutting and cleansing of roads*. Various tenders for the purchase of personal protective attire, products and equipment were also prepared, and evaluated by the Unit.

THE LIBRARY

The library continued to play a vital role in providing new material in the form of books, standards and magazines for the gathering of information and research to employees from the Ministry who utilise this facility in the course of their duties or to keep themselves up to date with developments in the field of activity that they practice.

ARCHITECTURAL CONSULTANCY SERVICES UNIT

National Flood Relief Project

The National Flood Relief Project, for which EU funding is being earmarked under the 2007-2013 Structural Funds, has taken a good step forward during the past year with the issue of a tender and the award of a €1.82m contract for an Environmental Impact Assessment, a Cost Benefit Analysis and further development of designs. Applications for the issue of the relative MEPA permits for the major works components were also submitted in December. Work on the drafting of the works tenders is anticipated to start early in 2010. The project will address the notorious flooding problems of the Lija-Balzan-Birkirkara-Msida localities, and will also include other project components that will provide the same level of flood relief to six other urbanised flood-prone areas, namely Qormi, Marsa, Żebbug, Gżira, Żabbar and Marsascale. The main components of the project are three underground tunnel systems that will collect street rain water by means of street inlet culverts and drop channels in various parts of the previously mentioned areas. The system for the B’Kara – Msida component will start from the areas of Wied Inċita, the area under the Mosta Tecno Park and the area near the National Swimming Pool in Gżira and has an underwater outflow at Ta’ Xbiex.

Another component that will alleviate flooding problems in Żebbug will start in the area of Triq il-Grazzia in Żebbuġ and have an outflow in Wied Qirda. The existing water retention basins in Wied is-Sewda in Qormi will be cleaned and possibly enlarged, an underground channel constructed and a number of bridges in the water channel in Qormi will be replaced by single span constructions to facilitate the flow of water. The existing channel and bend under the Aldo Moro road will also be realigned and enlarged. The intervention in Żabbar-Marsascale will start from the crossroads of Triq is-Santwarju and Triq Wied il-Għajn and have an outflow near the new sewage treatment plant at Xagħjra. Minor interventions and upgrading of existing culvert outlets to the sea in Msida, Gżira and Marsascale will also be undertaken. Two soak-away reservoirs are also planned to be constructed in Gżira and in Lija.

MARINE AND STORM WATER UNIT

Marine Projects

One of the projects that this Unit took in hand and completed in 2009 was that of the rehabilitation and dredging of the minor Sökkors water channel at Salini, by which the circulation of water around the Salini was restored. This channel, which is about 900 metres long was rehabilitated by the removal of some 10,000 cubic m of silt, concrete and debris, and the reconstruction of part of the channel by the insertion of 85 precast concrete U channels that form part of this channel and also reinforce the foundations of the adjoining road and Salini walls. The works were carried out by direct labour except for the hiring of equipment for the dredging.

Other marine works that this Unit undertook included:

- the project management of the extension of the quay at the AFM Maritime Squadron's depot in Hay Wharf;
- an investigation of the damages sustained by a quay at St Thomas Bay;
- the repair of the seawall that is retaining the road at Balluta Bay;
- the underpinning and reconstruction of part of the jetty at Spinola Bay that was badly damaged by storms in the previous year;
- the construction of an access ramp for bathing by the physically handicapped at the Exiles, Sliema; and
- the reconstruction of a storm water retaining dam in Wied Ghollieqa.

The Unit also prepared a number of tender documents for the issue of contracts to repair a number of slipways at Msida, Xaghjra, Ghadira Bay, and Marsaxlokk. A tender for the dredging of the fairway for the fisherman's port at M'Xlokk was also prepared and issued. A wave motion study was commissioned to help the Unit decide on the interventions that are necessary to repair the damaged breakwater near the Enemalta Power Station at Marsaxlokk, and to prepare designs for its extension in order to provide better shelter to the fishermen's fleet.

Another study that was commissioned by the Unit and is underway was for geotechnical investigations of the rock at the Ferries waterfront area in Sliema. This investigation is required in connection with the formulation of designs for an underground car park and embellishment works that are being proposed for this area.

Storm Water Projects

The Unit prepared and issued tenders for works in connection with alleviating storm water flooding problems in three streets in Pembroke and an area in Magħtab. It also started to gather information and prepare designs for other areas in Ta' Xbiex, Luqa, and Swieqi which will be tackled in 2010. Designs were completed and an application was submitted to MEPA for the rehabilitation of part of the Wied il-Għasel system and the construction of a number of storm water retention basins that will be capable of holding around 80,000 cubic metres of rain water. This project when completed would help in alleviating the problem of flooding in the Burmarrad low lying area. An application for EU funding for part of this project was also prepared and submitted.

VALLEY MANAGEMENT UNIT

During 2009, the Valley Management Unit (VMU) continued with the programme of maintenance and rehabilitation work in the following areas:

- removal of illegally dumped material and rubbish from Wied il-Kbir, Wied is-Sewda and Wied taċ-Ċawqli in Qormi; Wied tal-Isqof, Wied Lewża and Wied Zikku in Siġġiewi; part of Wied Qlejgħa (Chadwick Lakes) and Wied tal-Fiddien in Rabat; Wied Bassaza, Żurrieq; part of Wied Inċita and Wied Irmiedi at H'Attard; part of Wied Garnaw, Santa Lucia; Wied Qannotta, Burmarrad;
- cleaning of two large water reservoirs near the Maria Addolorata Cemetery, two large reservoirs in Żejtun and another in Siġġiewi;
- clearing of material and unwanted vegetation from the canals around the Marsa Sports Grounds;
- completion of dismantling and reconstruction of a 1.2 km long road retaining and boundary wall flanking the Marsa Sports Ground;
- cleaning of a reservoir and a picnic area at Wied Ghomor in San Ġwann;
- cleaning of storm water sumps and part of Wied Ghollieqa.

During 2009, around 5,000 tons of material were removed from valleys and reservoirs.

The VMU also continued with the gathering of information to update its database on existing storm water reservoirs, together with the collection of information to start an inventory on valleys. In mid-2009 the VMU obtained from the Water Services Corporation, permission to use premises in Qormi which were

added to their base of operations. Office staff stationed in Project House continued also with photographing, cataloguing and recording the interventions that are carried out by the Unit and also the gathering of information on existing storm water reservoirs. The VMU prepared and issued a tender for the construction of a storm water culvert to alleviate flooding problems near the roundabout leading to Mater Dei Hospital at the San Gwann Industrial Zone and another culvert in part of Sliema Road zira. An Environmental Assessment Report was also commissioned and carried out in connection with a MEPA application for a proposed storm water retention and soak-away reservoir in Wied Ghollieqa.

CARMEL MIFSUD BORG
Director General (Services Division)

Services Division

Manufacturing and Services Department

The Manufacturing and Services Department carries out engineering works within the Ministry for Resources and Rural Affairs. It incorporates the following trades: carpentry, metal trades, plumbing and electrical installations and repairs, traffic lights section, lifts and air-condition servicing, co-operative for traffic signs and road marking, and vehicles and plant repairs. All trades are located at Marsa, except for vehicles and plant garages, which are situated at Kordin.

MSD is now also responsible for the vehicles and plant of the Agriculture Department, operating from the Ghammieri farm, and other vehicles deployed at other departments.

MARSA BRANCH

The Marsa Branch of MSD continued to serve the Ministry of Resources and Rural Affairs by providing the technical works for various embellishment projects carried out by the Ministry and at the same time provides maintenance services to other departments, both within and outside MRRA. The staff complement at Marsa numbers 335, including the workers of the co-operative organisation Koptasin.

During the year, 640 new jobs were initiated in all the sections while 719 jobs were closed. It is to be noted that a job is considered open till all paperwork is compiled and concluded. The table below summarises the works and values of the various sections, excluding Koptasin.

	New Jobs	Closed Jobs
Carpentry	116	117
Aluminium	64	80
Metal Trade	139	148
Air-conditioning	71	79
Lifts Section	39	51
Electrical	134	161
Plumbing	79	83
Total	642	719

Carpentry Section

The Carpentry Section manufactures and installs timber works and carries out restoration works on old apertures as instructed by architects in charge of project works. The Section manufactures also public garden furniture such as benches, litter bins, gazeboes and shadings. These are used at sites that are embellished by MRRA. The Section carried out 116 new jobs during 2009.

The main works carried out in 2009 were the continuation of restoration and new manufacture of timber apertures as needed at Girgenti Palace and Auberge de Castille façade. The Ministry offices were refurbished and the internal apertures and office furniture, where needed, were manufactured anew. Garden furniture was manufactured for Kennedy Grove, St Anne Square in Sliema, Xghajra Promenade, Pembroke and the National Adventure Park. The latter entailed a lot of work, including gazeboes, shading and benches. CMD offices were furnished with oak conference table, new windows and doors. Other red deal apertures were manufactured for Gharghur tower and Verdala Palace. Maintenance works were carried out at Independence Garden and Spinola Garden. Maintenance works were carried out at National Audit Office, MRRA offices and other departments.

Aluminium Section

The Aluminium Section carries out manufacture and installation of aluminium apertures and fixtures as needed by clients. Furthermore, it carries out works with gypsum and false ceilings (soffits). All clients are government department and entities.

The Section carried out 64 new jobs and others that were started during the previous year. Aluminium apertures, gypsum partitions and soffits were erected at Projects House as part of embellishment works carried within the building. Works at Projects House included the renewal of apertures on the main entrance and other partitions to create smoking areas for users of the block. Erecting and shifting of partitions at various offices and other minor works were carried out as requested. Other gypsum and aluminium works were carried out at Auberge de Castille and Villa Francia. Works related to new offices were carried out at Ghammieri farm and Pitkali vegetable markers. A considerable amount of work was done in refurbishing Blocks A and B of MRRA. Other works were carried out at WasteServ offices and Neptunes Waterpolo pitch. Many odd jobs were also carried out in various other departments. Soffits, partitions and railings were manufactured for the Adventure Park, while work has started on the manufacture of apertures at the Animal After-Care Centre.

Metal Trades

The works carried out by this section during 2009 included the manufacture and installation of steel articles, the repair and restoration of steel articles, the installation of flagpoles in connection with state visits and national holidays, and various other works.

The major works completed during this year included:

- the manufacture and installation of steel railing at St George's Square, Valletta;
- manufacture of boat stands for fishermen's vessels;
- the restoration of the antique steel railing at St George's Square;
- the restoration of Auberge de Castille windows' security iron grills (ongoing);
- modifying and restoring anew beach ladders;
- the manufacture of wheelie bins frames and waste bins for beaches;
- various works of security fences, grills and doors at Ta' Kandja Detention Centre;
- works at St Anne Square Sliema and Kennedy Grove;
- replacing cladding, painting of metal structure and new water gutters of Buskett tent.

During 2009, 139 new jobs were opened while 148 others were completed.

Air-Conditioning Section

The Air-conditioning Section caters for the maintenance and repairs of some 3,000 split-unit air-conditioners and 15 centralised plants in government offices, health centres and hospitals. The Section is mostly busy during the warmer months of the summer, where it attends to repairs and breakdown of the units. During autumn and spring, when many air-condition units are not used, the Section carries out the maintenance required on the units to prepare for the months of high usage.

The Section attends to about a thousand calls for repairs every year. On a number of cases, AC units are dismantled and installed in a different place as needed by clients. The Section also inspects systems and draws up a condition report on a/c equipment and provide technical advice about maintenance/replacement of equipment.

Lifts Section

The Lift Section maintains and repairs about 88 lifts and hoists in various government buildings, offices, hospitals and health centres. This service includes emergency interventions as needed and is offered seven days a week.

The Section carries about 400 service calls per year. The works includes repairs, maintenance, upgrading of specific lifts, routine maintenance and assisting in carrying out engineer's certification. Repairs and medications as specified in engineer's report are carried out. The Section assists government departments in keeping abreast with new lifts and legislations by offering advice on the maintenance of same lifts.

Electrical Section

The Electrical Section carries out electrical installations in public gardens, promenades, government offices and at some other public spaces. It incorporates also a section that caters for all traffic lights installation and repairs, as instructed by ADT.

The main activity remain the repairs, alterations and upgrading of installations being requested within government building and offices, mainly in the Floriana and Valletta area. However, a considerable amount of work is carried out in various offices within our Ministry in various localities.

The main works include:

- Ta' Qali National Park and the amenity building within;
- second part of Xghajra Promenade light poles;
- lighting in public spaces – Santa Ubaldesca Church, Pembroke Garden, Xaghra ta' Kola Rabat;
- renewal of Mdina cathedral external lighting (ongoing);
- Kennedy Grove;
- St Georges Square Valletta and St Anne Square Sliema;
- lighting of public monuments and fountains;
- new traffic lights installation.

Apart from new installations, maintenance works to the lighting of gardens, promenades, traffic lights and lighting bollards in the traffic islands, are carried out as requested.

Plumbing Section

The works carried out by this section during 2009 included the installation or modification of hot and cold water domestic installations, the installation of irrigation systems, the repair or maintenance of fountains in various public areas and the installation and repairs of chain link fencing and iron railings in various localities.

The major works completed during this year included:

- the installation of the irrigation system and domestic water system of the amenity building at Ta' Qali Adventured Park;
- chain link fencing and netting at the various football grounds, including Mellieħa, Mtarfa, Mgarr and Pembroke;
- repair works on the Triton Fountain, Valletta;
- plumbing works at Block B Floriana;
- new fountains in Sliema and Paola;
- Animal Welfare Centre (ongoing);
- laying of new residential water mains in Cathedral Street Sliema.

During 2009, 79 new jobs were opened while 83 others were completed.

KORDIN BRANCH

Workshops

A total of 95 persons are currently employed at Kordin, including workshops staff, administration, personnel manning the MSD fuel station, four persons on loan to other departments, and six employees at the Fleet Management Section.

The Workshops are organised into five sections, namely Light Vehicles, Auto Electricians, Heavy Vehicles, Heavy Plant and Miscellaneous (including spray painting, panel beating, upholstery and vulcanising works). The jobs performed range from routine maintenance to overhauling and body work on light cars, vans, trucks and heavy plant equipment such as shovels, bulldozers and road rollers. The Workshops cater for vehicles and equipment owned by the MSD, as well as equipment owned by other departments. Various other departments make use of the services offered, the major customers being the Cleansing Services Department and the Construction and Maintenance Department (CMD).

The Fleet Management Section is responsible for identifying the transport needs of the various sections within the Ministry and deploying vehicles accordingly. The section is also responsible for hiring vehicles whenever the need arises and also includes a surveyor who investigates all cases of traffic contraventions and collisions involving vehicles owned by the MRRRA. The services of the surveyor are sometimes sought by other ministries and departments when their vehicles are involved in collisions or when they need to have his recommendations as to the disposition of particular vehicles within their respective fleets. The Fleet Management Section also incorporates the operations of the MSD fuel station and is responsible for the deployment of the computer-based Fleet Management System for the allocation of fuel to the various vehicles. This system also allows for closer monitoring of the fuel consumption of the vehicles in question.

The Workshops carried out a total of 2,653 jobs during 2009, the total value of repairs being €450,228, distributed as follows:

Section	No of Jobs	Material Cost €	Labour Cost €	Total Cost €
Heavy Plant	428	17,726	44,616	62,342
Heavy Vehicles	534	46,679	138,840	185,519
Light Vehicles	305	26,378	39,611	65,989
Auto Electrical	583	19,291	17,680	36,971
Miscellaneous	803	48,980	50,427	99,407
Total	2,653	159,054	291,174	450,228

The MSD fuel station is responsible for providing fuel for all vehicles and plant pertaining to the Works Division and the Services Division. Whenever possible, this is done at the station itself, but a bowser is used for distributing diesel to heavy plant and equipment located on the various work sites throughout the Island. The station is capable of supplying Unleaded Petrol, Diesel and Biodiesel. The following table summarises the consumption figures for the various types of fuel supplied in 2009.

Fuel Type	Amount (litres)	Cost €
Unleaded Petrol	168,966	178,626
Diesel	503,495	483,546
Bio Diesel	12,296	11,595
Total	684,757	673,767

The above fuel consumption figures show an increase of 7.1% in consumption figures over the previous year. This increase in consumption is mainly due to increased vehicle fleet deployed in cleaning public areas. In spite of this, the amount of money spent was 7.2% less; this difference is due to the decrease in cost of fuel.

This is the first year of operation of the fuel station at Kordin. The premises are better suited to give good service to the users of the station and are more comfortable for the employees working there.

The garage is also responsible for drawing up specifications for tenders that are issued by the Department. These include the purchase of equipment by the MSD and its customers and period contracts for replacement parts that are regularly used at the garage itself and also for the hiring of equipment such as excavators, loaders and cranes and for towing services for small vehicles and plant equipment.

The equipment purchased during the year 2009 together with the respective prices is tabulated below:

Description	€
2 in No. Flat-Bed Double Cab Pick-up van	34,000.00
2 in No. 9 Seater Passenger vans	48,400.00
1 in No. Three-way tipping light truck	32,330.00
2 in No. Skid Steer Loaders	58,522.00
Total	173,252.00

A tender for the purchase of two light cars for the MRRA is in progress. The MSD has also drafted tender specifications for specialised vehicles to be bought for use at the Civil Abattoir. These are for a truck with mounted crane and for a refrigerated truck to be used for the recovery of animal carcasses from farms around the island.

Risk Assessment exercises have been performed by the various section officers in liaison with Health and Safety officers with the aim of improving the working environment of personnel and minimising risk of injury and infection. Actions arising out of these exercises are regularly being implemented, however, other areas for improvement have been identified. These include the need to relocate certain workshops with a view to minimising the risk of accidents and the inhalation of spray paint and exhaust fumes. Further to this, it is being strongly felt that new workshops need to be constructed such that there is more space available where the various sections can work with increased safety and efficiency and without having to claim each other's floor space.

Vehicle and Plant Operations

This section caters for the vehicle and plant fleet of the whole Ministry. The aim is to have better coordination between the various departments in deploying the available vehicles to maximise the usage and output, leading to greater efficiency and lower operating costs.

The Section is responsible for distributing the vehicle resources on the various projects and work sites as needed. Hiring of vehicles, fuel issue and monitoring, and other matters related to the vehicle fleet operations are catered for by this section.

The Fleet Management System was introduced in the Works and Services Divisions to better implement this strategy within the Ministry. Fuel consumption within the Ministry is being better monitored.

MAINTENANCE UNIT, GHAMMIERI FARM

Workshops

During 2009, the Maintenance Section carried out the normal day-to-day maintenance and repairs at various sections of MRRA: National Agricultural Research and Development Centre – Ghammieri, Ministry offices, Fisheries, Plant Biotechnology Centre, Civil Abattoir, Extension Service Offices, Pitkali Markets. Besides these works the section carried out the following major works:

- NARDC - construction of two cages for Honey Buzzards;
- refurbishment of stores for Viticulture Offices;

- refurbishment of store for Control unit office;
- 8 Flush doors for Care Creates Change offices;
- Head Office - Dismantling of offices for shifting to Floriana;
- St Christopher Str. Office Shifting of Registry files to San Ġakbu;
- dismantling of Registry Archive shelving;
- San Ġakbu - construction of metal shelving for registry files and three eight steps platform trolleys and rails;
- ex-Ministry Barriera Wharf - shifting of Registry files to San Ġakbu and dismantling of metal shelving;
- Block A Floriana - repairs and general maintenance of all wooden apertures for new registry offices;
- Wastes Serv Equal Opportunity - preparation of wood for the construction of 500 used battery bins and 10 Group large wooden pots for tree planting;
- Razzett tal-Hbiberija - wooden fence;
- Buskett, Dingli, Lija - repairs to rubble walls;
- Pitkali Markets - cleaning of Rainwater reservoir. Plastering and Painting of new hall;
- Ta' Qali Park's Section - construction of 5 metal gates for Adventure Park;
- Kordin MSD Garage - demolition of old Vehicle cleaning platform;
- Ras Hanzir - refurbishment of two metal sheds to be used for Deprived Aid stores;
- exhibitions - erection of The Climate Change Exhibition and Recycle Tuesday stand at various localities around the island and Gozo.

MARTIN GRECH

Director (Manufacturing and Services Department)

Services Division

Cleansing Services Department

ADMINISTRATION

Although the workload and the responsibilities of the department increased steadily throughout 2009, all targets were met in spite of the employee turnover mainly due to retirements.

The recording of the daily attendance of all the employees, 546 in all, was computerised in 2009, thus facilitating the daily reporting process to the Human Resources section in Floriana.

Special emphasis was made this year was on the application of health and safety procedures by the workforce, who in turn were also provided with adequate clothing such as handling gloves, as well as with road safety marking equipment.

REVENUE

The Department continued to provide services to local councils and other entities. These services consisted in the cleaning of urban roads, the cleaning of public conveniences, and the collection of bulky waste from private residences. Arrears of revenue in respect of fees due to the department for services in connection with the disposal of waste at the former Magħtab landfill continued to be collected; legal proceedings were instituted against customers who despite various warnings failed to comply.

A breakdown of the revenue collected from services to entities in 2009 is as follows:

Total Revenue for 2009	
<i>Description</i>	<i>Euros</i>
Local Councils	455,088.38
Landfills	6,892.65
Extra Services	294,822.27
Others	23,072.07
VAT	140,656.68
Grand Total	920,532.05

CONTRACTS OF SERVICES HELD WITH LOCAL COUNCILS

Contracts with local councils for 2009 vis-à-vis street sweeping, collection of bulky waste, and cleaning of public conveniences were as follows:

Annual Values of Contracts with Local Councils			
<i>Local Council</i>	<i>Value (Euros)</i>	<i>Contract</i>	<i>Description</i>
Birgu	12,672	Public conv.	
Bormla	5,572	Public conv.	
Fgura		bulky	€4.76 per household
Gharghur	8,637	sweeping	
		bulky	€4.67 per household
Ghaxaq	28,651	sweeping	
Gudja	20,638	sweeping	
	8,153	Public conv.	
		bulky	€4.19 per household

Kirkop	6,972	sweeping	
		bulky	€5.82 per household
Lija	6,972	sweeping	
	2,714	public conv.	
		bulky	€5.82 per household
M'Scala	7,516	public conv.	
M'Xlokk	16,525	sweeping	
	7,745	public conv.	
		bulky	€4.43 per household
Mdina	6,536	public conv.	
Mellieha	26,143	public conv.	
		bulky	€4.19 per household
Mgarr	4,659	public conv.	
		bulky	€4.89 per household
Mosta	1,165	public conv.	
Naxxar	10,948	public conv.	
Qrendi	8,017	sweeping	
	6,238	public conv.	
		bulky	€5.82 per household
Safi	6,972	sweeping	
		bulky	€5.82 per household
San Ġiljan	75,832	sweeping	
	19,343	public conv.	
		bulky	€4.66 per household
San Pawl		bulky	€4.19 per household
Sta Luċija	5,823	public conv.	
Sliema	101,257	sweeping	
	33,543	public conv.	
		bulky	€5.12 per household
Valetta	69,881	sweeping	
Commercial area	58,234	sweeping	
Xghajra	6,972	sweeping	
Żabbar	72,210	sweeping	
	23,294	public conv.	
Żejtun	28,681	sweeping	
	19,122	public conv.	
		bulky	€4.43 per household

COLLECTION OF BULKY WASTE

The provision of the service for collecting bulky waste from private residences was continued efficiently by this Department, the service being given throughout 15 localities. Although given free of charge to residents, the Department charges expenses on a contractual basis to local councils.

Total Revenue from Bulky Waste Collection Service		
	Number of calls	Amount Invoiced (€)
Total	17,091	83,594

Amount of Bulky Waste Collected from Households									
	No. of Calls	Metal	Wood	Mattresses	Sofas	White Goods	IT & TV	Glass & Others	Total Items
Total	17,091	8,042	8,598	3,641	1,216	7,584	3,055	13,354	45,193

PUBLIC CONVENIENCES

Throughout the year in question, the Department renewed 24 contracts of service with local councils for the upkeep of public conveniences in the respective localities. Apart from this, the Department manages several other public conveniences that fall under the responsibility of central government.

CUSTOMER CARE SERVICE

The Quality Service Charter adopted by the Department is being constantly revised to reflect an ongoing improvement in the quality of the service delivery. The following table shows the number of complaints filed with the Department up to December 2009. All complaints were settled within stipulated target dates.

Customer Care Complaints Handling								
	No of Calls - Freephone	Received by e-mail	Received by fax	Newspaper Cuttings	Complaints referred to Local Council	Carried out by CSD on same day	Carried out within one week	Referred to other entities
Total	992	-	-	22	129	542	275	68

CLEANING OF ARTERIAL ROADS

Work processes involved in the cleaning of arterial roads are quite extensive and include sweeping, collection of litter and residue, grass cutting along the kerbs, and a rapid response action to remove obstacles such as dead animals and spilled material. The nature of the work is both labour and machine intensive, with the Unit having at its disposal five mechanical sweepers and two vehicles for transporting water.

Cleaning requests of an urgent nature involved mainly the removal of dead animals and the removal of spillage in arterial roads. There were cases where the material in question was illegally dumped by irresponsible persons, and timely response by the cleaning unit served a twofold purpose, that of cleaning and that of removing obstacles that could cause harm through accidents. Spillages originated also from overloaded vehicles carrying building material including concrete. The unit responded also to requests for cleaning of industrial zones and areas popular for recreational purposes such as parks and other popular spots.

Around 500 litter bins were emptied on a daily schedule. These bins are situated along the route from the Malta International Airport to Valletta, along the promenades from St Julians to Pieta' Creek, others fixed next to bus shelters in all the arterial roads around Malta.

Regular cleaning and washing of the carriage way along the tunnels, subways, the bus terminus in Floriana, was carried out on a regular basis. Ancillary cleaning works included the cleaning of hundreds of traffic signage and barriers fixed in arterial roads, and the removal of a large amount of illegally fixed advertising material. In order not to disrupt traffic flow, work was carried out at night time with police attendance in order to provide the safest possible working environment for departmental personnel. Waste material deposited in landfills in 2009 totalled 19,822 tonnes. It is estimated that:

- 8411.60 tonnes (42.44%) of waste was inert waste dumped illegally;
- 501.40 tonnes (2.53%) was illegally dumped and collected litter;
- 380.50 tonnes (1.92%) was made up of grass cutting; and
- 10,528.40 tonnes (53.12%) was waste coming from demolition and projects.

The estimated cost for collecting, transporting, and disposing of this waste amounted to €323,297, at the rate of €16.31 per tonne.

Works carried out during 2009 of type: general cleaning									
General cleaning	Mechanical sweeping	Removal of material	Litter picking	General cleaning	Removal of posters	Washing of signage	Labour Cost	Other Costs	Total Cost
Km	Km	Tonnes	Km	Sq Mts	No	No	€	€	€
2,815.11	8753.15	22,617	28,371.43	1,410.00	17,645	1038.00	1,031,848	324,327	1,356,175

TARGET CLEANSING INITIATIVE

Whereas the cleansing services provided by the Department used to be mainly concerned only with arterial roads, as of August 2008, the 'scope' of the Department's work was transformed from that of simply

implementing the cleaning of arterial roads, to taking ownership of the cleaning treatment relating to all sites/roads around the whole of Malta. To this effect, a programme, based on an innovative concept of Target Cleansing, was introduced and implemented under the name of Cleansing Response Programme (CRP).

The CRP attends to Cleansing Response Areas (CRAs), sites/roads that are identified (a) by third parties through freephone, emails, newspapers, etc., and/or (b) proactively by CSD itself through a newly set-up Cleansing Response Team (CRT), which conducts daily two-hourly site visits for this purpose. Once identified, these CRAs are put on a 'fast track' cleaning programme: CRAs falling within the Department's responsibility are dealt with within 48 hours; whereas CRAs relating to other entities, such as local councils, ELC, ADT, etc, are cleaned within a week, following a 3-day notice to the respective entity or local council. Before and After Works Inspections (BWIs & AWIs) documented photos are taken in order to measure and ensure work implementation.

The following table demonstrates the number of cases dealt with under the CRP, including those falling within the remit or boundaries of local councils but implemented by the CSD:

Cleansing Response Programme (CRP)				
Cases 2009				
<i>Cases</i>	<i>Closed</i>	<i>Pending</i>	<i>Local Councils</i>	<i>CSD</i>
181	124	57	129	52

CRP cases involving CRAs within Local Councils' boundaries					
Attard	2	B'Buġa	7	B'Kara	4
Birgu	1	Bormla	1	Dingli	2
Floriana	2	Hamrun	4	Safi	1
Fgura	1	Kalkara	3	Ta' Xbiex	1
Mtarfa	1	Gudja	1	Mellieha	3
Mġarr	2	Sta Venera	1	Marsa	11
Ghaxaq	1	M'Scala	5	Mosta	5
M'Xlokk	2	Naxxar	6	Paola	8
Pieta'	2	Pembroke	1	Qormi	3
Rabat	8	San Ġwann	9	Mqabba	2
Siggiewi	6	Xgħajra	2	Żejtun	5
St Julians	2	Swieqi	1	Tarxien	2
Zabbar	2	San Pawl	2	Zurrieq	7

NEW UNITS AND WORK PRACTICES

New units were set up within the CSD in 2009, as well as new work practices which were introduced in order to not only to sustain fully the regular arterial roads cleaning programme, but also to ensure the efficient running and effectiveness of the CRP initiative.

The Project Planning Unit, built on a 3-tier structure of *plan*, *monitor* and *measure*, was set up last year, which effectively provided a sound framework for the introduction of new work practices in relation to the proper handling and execution of cleaning operations. This unit has also been detailed the monitoring and executive role behind the newly launched and more adept works inspection structure – involving, on a daily basis, two fully documented inspections (before and after) on site of works.

A Transport Management Unit was also set up, focusing on establishing and implementing effective management and handling of our transport fleet (timely deployment, repairs and replacement policies, etc), which incidentally incorporates one of the largest inventory of government vehicles. A positive outcome of this initiative was in ensuring the 'all time' availability of transport needs for CSD workers; hence, eliminating so much idle and unproductive man hours of work due to lack of transport availability in the past.

BEACH CLEANING UNIT

As of March 2009, the Beach Cleaning Unit was transferred to the Cleansing Services Department.

The BCU is responsible for the cleaning of beaches and coastal landscape around Malta, which also includes the removal of seaweed that surface the island's shores and beaches, besides the general cleaning and emptying of bins designated in these areas. In fact, the recorded amount of seaweed removed in 2009 was of 7,000 tonnes.

As soon as this Unit migrated to the CSD, action was taken to design and implement a reform programme with a view to upgrading drastically the performance levels and quality of cleaning delivered by the BCU. This reform programme was also implemented in line with the amalgamation process being targeted for both workforces relating to the CSD and the BCU; an amalgamation that rendered positive outcomes in maximising the work output and potential of both sets of workers.

The reform programme which was successfully implemented in relation to the BCU involved:

- *Classification of beaches:* Beaches were classified into three classes – Class A, B, and C – with regard to criteria such as density, popularity/attraction, touristic value, etc.
- *New Work Practices:* New work processes and practices in handling and effecting beach cleaning were introduced in order for beach cleaning, not only to be more efficient and effective, but also render tangible positive results. Of note in this regard is the visual presence of beach cleaners on beaches; treating waste collection and handling in dust-bag equipped modern wheelie bins, rather than 'eye-sore' tanks; waste collection from newly introduced bins equipped for 'separation at source'.
- *Cleaning Frequencies:* Beach cleaning frequencies were drastically increased – stretching cleaning man-hours up to early evening, on a 7-day schedule – in order to increase cleansing frequency and treatment of beaches according to the introduced classification.
- *New Beach Furniture:* Modern ladders and bins were installed on beaches. Indeed the installation of the new wheelie bins not only provided the added value of the 'separation at source' concept, but also permitted for new beach cleaning work practices to be introduced due to their ease of waste handling in contrast with the old system of waste collection in tanks.

PURCHASE OF MACHINERY

To enhance better the performance levels and quality of cleaning services offered by this department, a total of 40 vehicles/machinery were purchased during 2009, costing around €400,000. This purchase consisted of: 3 Mechanical Sweepers; 2 Wheel Shovels; 8 Tipper Vans; 9 Tipper Trucks; 1 Loading Van; 2 Refuse Vehicles; 2 Transporter Vans; 1 Trailer; 1 Animal Rescue Van; 1 Skip Loader and 10 Skips.

MARIO RODGERS

Director (Cleansing Services)

EU Affairs Directorate

Mission Statement

To act as the Ministry's focal point and guide on EU policies and other related matters and financial programmes.

INTRODUCTION

Following the integration of the two former Ministries (for Rural Affairs and the Environment and for Resources) into the new Ministry for Resources and Rural Affairs, internal restructuring led to a more efficient Directorate better able to cope with its demanding workload.

The Directorate continued to strive to fulfil its role of the Ministry's focal point for all EU related matters, coordinating both the development of EU policies in the local context and our attendance at meetings in EU fora, ensuring that a suitable consolidated National Position is propagated thereat. The Directorate also continued to strive to ensure maximum participation in all EU funding programmes, as well as any similar programmes with individual Member States and monitoring the implementation of all projects that are benefiting from such co-funding.

POLICY UNIT

The Policy Unit proactively followed through on its 2009 work plan, placing particular emphasis on improving synergies and communication with the Ministry's line divisions, departments and entities including establishing and training of EU coordinators within line divisions and departments. This arrangement has proven to be effective and improvement has been registered in coordinating with these departments and in the preparation of EU core documentation. The Policy Officers responsible for the Climate Change dossier also had to handle a very intensive year building up to a climax in the last quarter with the Swedish Presidency increasing the number of meetings in the lead-up to the Copenhagen (COP 15) meetings held in December 2009, culminating in what is now called the Copenhagen Accord. The Unit also implemented family friendly measures (teleworking) for two officers; this arrangement led to an increase in output and efficiency, especially in the compilation of EU related core policy documentation.

EU FUNDS UNIT

The Unit continued to monitor and provide active assistance and guidance to all project leaders handling more than 50 projects falling under a comprehensive range of different sectors, including the Agriculture and Fisheries grant schemes and Community Initiatives (INTERREG, EQUAL, etc) as well as those projects being co-financed under the Structural and Cohesion funds. The Funds Manager continued to identify and resolve problems to ensure a smooth and timely implementation of these projects. This Unit processed, during 2009, the total sum of €6,811,769 and €2,004,287 respectively under the 2004-2006 and 2007-2013 funding programmes. The Unit also played a successful key role in the closure of the 2004-2006 programme.

The Directorate provided assistance to its line divisions and departments to set up the institutions required to assume the role of Managing Authority in respect of the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Fisheries Fund for the 2007-2013 funding period.

The integration presented new challenges in that the Unit had to assume responsibility for additional projects from the Works Division, Malta Resources Authority and the Malta College of Science and Technology. These were taken in hand, and assistance and guidance provided as necessary to each project leader.

JOSEPH DE GIORGIO
Director (EU Affairs)

People Management and Support Services Directorate

The People Management and Support Services Directorate (PMSSD) services the entire Ministry in all matters dealing with resourcing and employment, conditions of service and employee relations, training and attendance administration. The Directorate thus contributes to the collective management of the Ministry by supporting the line departments on these matters and guiding employees from the moment of engagement until retirement.

STAFF RECRUITMENT, APPOINTMENTS AND PROMOTIONS

The Ministry for Resources and Rural Affairs had a staff complement of 3,425 employees at the end of 2008. A manpower plan was drawn up to determine the complement and deployment of staff. A capacity building exercise was carried out in order to fill vacancies that resulted within the various divisions of the Ministry. The Office of the Prime Minister approved a number of calls and during 2009 the Recruitment Section processed 70 calls for applications for the recruitment of staff in order to fill over 180 posts and positions within the Ministry. During the year, 37 employees were recruited from outside the Public Service. The Recruitment Unit issued and/or processed 145 Appointments, 37 new Contracts, 44 Promotions and 83 Confirmation of Appointments. The transfers of 35 employees from the MRRA to other ministries were vetted, whilst 42 employees were transferred to this Ministry.

During 2009, the Beach Cleaning Section comprising of 61 employees were deployed with MRRA. These employees now form part of the Cleansing Services Division. Furthermore, during 2009 a total of 39 ex-Postal employees were assimilated as Clerks within the Ministry.

On 31 December 2009, the staff complement of MRRA stood at 3,351.

SECURITY SERVICES

The Security and Watchmen Section within the PMSSD is entrusted with around-the-clock surveillance of buildings, public areas and work in progress on projects falling under the remit of the Ministry. This Section is responsible of ensuring that precautionary measures are taken to prevent unauthorised entry and to curb the incidence of vandalism in the above mentioned sites. The expansion of the Ta' Qali and Salina Parks present a challenge in monitoring these parks especially on weekends when large numbers of people congregate to relax and spend quality time with their children in these parks. During 2009 Security Staff carried out 130 random inspections on employees at various sites including outstations. These inspections were held during morning and afternoon working hours, overtime duties and also during weekend and night shifts.

DATA MANAGEMENT

During 2009 the Data Management Unit continued to manage the HRIMS software for the Ministry by vetting the names and grades of employees on the regularly updated Staff List. This Unit is also responsible for the monthly completion of the Employment Returns and keeps a record of all staff movements within the Ministry. The Unit attended training at OPM in connection with the Skills Profiling Exercise that is scheduled to take place in 2010.

CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

The Directorate received 61 reports of cases where workers were injured on duty during 2009. Liaising with the Health Division, the Directorate also vetted 19 cases of employees who were recommended to be medically boarded out, in order to establish whether they were fit for duty or otherwise. Retirement age was reached by 157 employees and their respective pension papers were processed by the Officer in charge of Pensions.

OMBUDSMAN CASES

During the year the Directorate also continued to liaise with the Office of the Ombudsman with regard to the Ministry employees who sought redress from the Office of the Ombudsman. In this regard, six cases were investigated and submissions were sent thereon. The Ombudsman decided that there were no cases of maladministration on the part of the Ministry.

TIME AND ATTENDANCE

The Notification System is a system whereby the daily attendances/absences in each work place are recorded on a notification sheet which is then emailed to the Directorate, on a daily basis. During 2008 this attendance management system was spread across the entire newly amalgamated Ministry. A total of 255 Notification Forms are received daily; these are scrutinised for verification purposes and the relevant attendance and leave records are subsequently inputted into the HRIMS software system.

The year 2009 also saw the introduction of a new Attendance Verification System which will eventually replace the traditional attendance sheets. This was done in order to meet the provisions of the Collective Agreement 2005-2010. In this regard Finger Readers were installed at 17 work stations. Whilst still at experimental stage, the installation of these Finger Readers forms part of a preparatory exercise in readiness for a new data management system that is being coordinated by the Management and Personnel Office of OPM. This new data system involves the implementation of a new Payroll System. MITA shall be giving this new Payroll System, running on DAKAR HR software, a Pilot Run during 2010.

During the year, 155 pre-retirement leave arrangements were processed in respect of officers who are due to retire in 2010.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

During 2009 the PMSSD handled the Performance Management Plans of 443 officers (General Service and Departmental Grades) who form part of the performance management programme at this Ministry, which is overseen by the Management and Personnel Office at OPM. The evaluation of these assessment sheets are used in dealing with the progressions of the same employees. Throughout the year, 471 Increments and 95 Progressions were processed.

TRAINING

During 2009 the Training Unit continued to coordinate the training of employees at the Staff Development Organisation. Altogether there were 383 MRRA employees who attended for 68 training sessions organised by the SDO. These courses included training in IT, Personal Development as well as Office and Management Skills. Over 300 employees who are to reach retirement age during 2010 and 2011 were also encouraged to attend a Pre Retirement Course.

External Training

During 2009 the Ministry undertook to sponsor eight employees (six male and two female) to attend courses at the Institute of Agriculture at the University of Malta, reading for a Diploma in Agriculture and a Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Mediterranean Agro-Ecosystems Management.

Away Day for People Management and Support Services Staff

In April, an Away Day was held for staff at the People Management and Support Services Directorate. The theme chosen for the day was Team Building and the general organisation was aimed at promoting team spirit within the Directorate. The event, attended by 35 officers, was a big success in reaching its objective.

Induction Course

In October, an Induction Course was organised for all newly engaged staff as well as HR contact persons across the line departments. The half-day seminar was addressed by the Minister and comprised presentations during which the attendees were informed about the Public Service at large, the general set-up of this Ministry and the various services offered by PMSSD. A presentation about the implications of the Code of Ethics was also included.

Away Day for Top Management

Following the success of the 2008 'Away Day for Top Management', this event was once again organised in October 2009 by the Training Unit. A foreign trainer was engaged and the theme chosen was *Better Communications*. The Away Day was held at the Bighi training premises of the Malta Council for Science and Technology. It was attended by 23 members of the Top Management Staff: the Permanent Secretary, Directors General, Directors, Chief Executive Officers and Chairpersons of entities falling under the remit of the Ministry. The Principal Permanent Secretary joined the participants in the morning workshops. For the second year running the feedback of the participants was very positive and included a general request for another Away Day in 2010.

DISCIPLINE

The discipline strategy drawn up in 2008 to address recurring defaults particularly at workplaces situated outside office areas of the Ministry by means of random inspections, was cascaded to the Foremen of industrial staff during a meeting at Projects House in May 2009 which was addressed by the Minister. The meeting stressed the need for better regulation and enforcement of discipline at the place of work, stressing the need to curb absences without authority. In this regard, random site inspections had started in September 2008. During 2009, from 130 random inspections made, 263 employees were found absent from their place of work. Each situation being assessed on its own merits, 230 Charges were issued for absence without authority. Given that the overall Charges issued in all areas of offences stood at 291, absence without authority made up 79% of the entire disciplinary effort made by the Directorate.

At the same time, the Directorate continued to make use of the services of a private medical firm in order to meet the verification of sick leave demands of the whole Ministry. The Charges issued for malingering (when a visiting doctor finds the door closed or is not answered at the door) amounted to 31, which translate into 1% of the entire disciplinary effort. Other Charges initiated by the Discipline Unit include insubordination, idling at the place of work, negligence and dereliction of duties.

In terms of the Public Service Commission (Disciplinary Procedure) Regulations 1999, the Directorate passed on to the PSC the cases of five employees who had reached the stage of dismissal. The Commission ruled the dismissal of only one case: this was a Serious Disciplinary Charge for disobeying superior orders.

During 2009 the Directorate also dealt with several new criminal cases involving this Ministry's employees (two employees had between them no less than 15 cases initiated at the Criminal Courts of Malta) and at the end of 2009 the Ministry had 18 such pending Criminal Cases, for which four employees are suspended from performing their duties and as such interdicted on half pay. At the same time, the Public Service Commission recommended the dismissal of six employees as a result of a guilty verdict at the Criminal Courts of Malta. All were subsequently dismissed during 2009.

FAMILY-FRIENDLY MEASURES

In line with Government policy to promote family friendly measures, the Directorate during 2009 encouraged and advised the staff within this Ministry to benefit from these measures.

Flexi Hours

Within the Directorate itself, family friendly measures were adopted with the objective of better work-life balance which promotes motivation among the staff. As a result flexi hours covering both the winter and summer work schedule were introduced. This is a win-win situation whereby the Directorate guarantees a presence till 17:15 in winter and 15:15 in summer and accommodates officers who would have otherwise resorted to reduced hours with the resulting financial consequences. The various timetables strike a balance between the different lifestyles of the staff and meet the requirements of this Directorate as an efficient service provider. Family-friendly measures sustained motivation and guaranteed the service with a smile that this Directorate is naturally expected to stand for.

Telework

During 2009 applications for telework across the line departments increased from eight (the number of applicants up to end of 2008) to 28 by the end of 2009. A total of 25 applications (21 females and four males) were processed up to contract stage by the end of the year, of which two (a male and a female) are employees working on telework arrangements at the People Management and Support Services Directorate.

JOHN BORG

Director (People Management and Support Services)

Financial Management Directorate

FINANCE BRANCH

The Financial Management Directorate continued with its role of providing the various departments within the Ministry for Resources and Rural Affairs with the necessary, and essentially effective, assistance in matters relating to finance and procurement of supplies and services, whilst providing management with the necessary financial monitoring by means of the Financial Control Unit. The Directorate is also responsible for the administration of the main registry.

Accounts Section

During 2009, the Accounts Section continued with the restructuring programme being undertaken at this section – a programme that has now been running for the past five years. This programme, under the name of *Management Efficiency Programme* (MEP), is transforming the Accounts Section into a proactive role, whilst integrating concepts such as ‘accountability’ and ‘value for money’ within all its structures and work processes.

The MEP sets out the clear objectives of the Accounts Section and implements a whole re-engineering of all the work processes, transforming the Accounting Officers role from a passive to an active and dynamic one. Thanks to this programme, a new and innovative structure was set up within the Accounts Section aimed towards increasing efficiency and cost effectiveness in accounting processes, particularly the early settlement of dues to the Department’s suppliers.

Through the MEP, several initiatives and new comprehensive financial reports were introduced within the Works Division and the Ministry. One such report is a detailed financial report regarding Capital Projects. This report is issued monthly and within five days of the following month for which period it covers. This comprehensive report presents a detailed and clear financial status position on each capital project being undertaken by the Ministry – from the early soft commitment stage throughout the whole life-cycle of the project until it is fully paid up.

With a view to implementing new concepts in managing finances more efficiently and effectively, the MEP introduced the Project Management Programme (PMP). The PMP served as a valuable management tool whereby senior officers from the Accounts Section set up monthly meetings with every Project Manager responsible for each Capital project, being undertaken by the Ministry. These project management meetings serve to establish expenditure targets of each project and to regularly monitor the progress in the implementation of these projects. The outcomes of this Project Management Programme are to better manage our Capital Vote through clear projected expenditure and to step up project implementation.

Revenue Section

A restructuring programme is also underway at the Revenue Section. The section was reorganised in two units: the Cash Office and the Collection Unit. In collaboration with the Contracts and Procurement Section, the Cash Office within the Revenue Section is a ‘One Stop Shop’ regarding tendering/payment procedures.

Up to now, prospective bidders had to call at the Contracts and Procurement Section, and in some cases even at the Chief Draughtsman's Office in Project House, before and after attending the Cash Office in order to effect payments relating to quotation/tender documents. With the setting up of this 'One Stop Shop', all quotation/tender documents and any plans that form part of these tendering documents are to be sold as one complete set at the Cash Office, without the need of the prospective bidders to attend other sections.

Efficiency and effective levels continued to be improved at the Collection Unit within the Revenue Section. New systems and structures have been introduced in order to step up the control and monitoring processes regarding the collection of outstanding dues from various departments within the Works Division and on the proper registration of claims.

FINANCIAL CONTROL UNIT

The main role of the Financial Control Unit (FCU) is:

- to exercise financial control over the expenditure being incurred by the various departments and units throughout the Ministry;
- to investigate, formulate and initiate cost-cutting measures and structures; and to assess the financial viability of the Ministry's initiatives. The FCU strives to implement effective control and monitoring on the commitments raised and the relative outstanding payments. Through various structures that have been set up and coordinated by the FCU, commitments, and their respective settlement, are being more effectively managed. Allotted funds are being utilised more efficiently and effectively, whilst expenditure wastage and excess is continually being identified and rectified. Moreover the formulation of business plans and projections is much more realistic.
- The FCU is engaged in the introduction of various programmes and exercises that are directed towards effective control and monitoring of the expenditure being generated, both relating to the operations in general (e.g. overheads) of all the Departments within the Ministry, as also to capital infrastructural projects that our Ministry is undertaking. The main focal thrust exercised by the FCU is to create or regenerate a 'value for money' concept within all operations/structures throughout the Ministry and also to establish itself as a catalyst in curbing government expenditure.

Utilities Programme

During the year under review and following the amalgamation of the two Ministries, a full and comprehensive inventory of all telephone lines and water and electricity accounts was undertaken to include the large number of newly acquired accounts formerly falling under the responsibility of MRRA.

As a result of this inventory compilation, all telephone billings are now being handled by the FCU. The FCU, besides maintaining and updating an inventory of telephone lines, also monitors the operational cost of each line and audits excessive bills through itemised billings.

The same exercise conducted for telephone bills is also carried out on Water and Electricity billings. Each individual account is closely monitored and audited. The outcome of this programme is aimed towards the identification of the true cost of each individual account, thus highlighting all those cases where unjustified excessive expenditure is being incurred.

Salaries Support Unit

The Salaries Support Unit is responsible for the flow of information that is transmitted from the directorate in Malta to the Gozo-based Salaries Section that caters for the computation of all salaries of this Ministry. This Unit serves as the liaison office through which all information relating to the correct computation of all salaries is channelled, besides acting as a customer-care unit for our employees.

All salaries pertaining to all the departments within this Ministry are being processed by the Ministry for Gozo employees under our direct management. This Unit closely monitors the operations of this back-office work being done in Gozo with a view to maintaining the high efficiency levels expected from this Section.

During 2009 particular attention has been given to the effective management of overtime work. Following consultations with the Office of the Permanent Secretary, a revision of existing arrangements for the planning and control of overtime work has been introduced. This Directorate carried out a reassessment of the parameters that were in force for the payment of overtime, giving due consideration to mechanisms that will control and curb excessive overtime, whilst providing a more structured system for the approval of overtime work.

Travel Support Unit

The Travel Support Unit was established to take full responsibility of the travel arrangements required by this Ministry's officials requiring overseas travel abroad. During the year under review, this Directorate has established written guidelines and procedures, based on standing financial regulations, whereby a complete overhaul of the Ministry's travel system was introduced.

The aim of this exercise was to standardise procedures for the request and granting of approval to proceed abroad on official business, besides safeguarding that all official meetings abroad are properly represented by this Ministry's delegations and all expenditure incurred during such visits is accounted for.

CONTRACTS AND PROCUREMENT SECTION

Responsibilities

- Procurement of all the needs of the Ministry for Resources and Rural Affairs, as well as for the issue of all contracts that are required to implement the various projects undertaken by the departments falling within the Ministry portfolio.
- Processing of requisitions for the procurement of all types of material, equipment, stationery, the purchase and repairs of machinery and equipment, and other stores through the nominated period contractors and from the open market. For this purpose, a large central store is situated at Mriehel and a smaller store for stationery and other day-to-day requirements is found at Floriana.
- Dealing with the disposal of various unserviceable and obsolete items from various departments either by selling the items *tale quale* following calls for tenders or, if found unserviceable, by dumping such items at appropriate dumping sites following the standard procedure through appointed boards of survey.
- Compilation and management of the Ministry's inventory.

Activities

During 2009, the Contracts and Procurement Section issued a total of 252 calls for tenders resulting in the award of 162 contracts for works, supplies and services for a total amount of €4,117,535. In line with the Financial Regulations, 38 direct orders for supplies or services were placed during the year for a total amount of €1,480,121.

Categorisation of contracts issued is shown in the following table:

	Calls for tenders	Awarded Contracts	Value (€)
Contracts Department Tenders	13	1	197,574
Departmental Tenders	179	120	3,777,232
Departmental Quotations	54	35	127,788
Departmental Hand Quotations	6	6	14,941
Departmental Direct Orders	38	38	1,480,121
Totals	290	200	5,597,656

Purchase of material from contractors holding period contracts with the Works Division and Services Division amounted to €605,182. For the procurement of this material, a total of 763 GSPOs were processed. Further GSPOs raised by the Floriana and Mriehel stores for the purchase of stationery and other items, other than period contract material, amounted to 3,296 for a total sum of €1,048,179.

The total number of tender and quotation documents sold during the year was 994 with a global income of €28,055.

Besides the ongoing contracts for supplies and services continuously required, the CPS issued a number of contracts connected with the Ministry's focal points for 2009, namely:

- creating a national park at Ta' Qali;
- rehabilitating St George's Square, Valletta; St Anne Square, Sliema and other open spaces for the general public;
- setting up of an afforestation and visitors' centre at Xrobb l-Ghagin;
- beach cleaning;
- establish an animal after-care centre at Ta' Qali;
- continuing the ongoing project of embellishing landscapes, beeches, recreational spots, village cores, historical places and tourist attractions;
- controlling and harvesting of storm water.

In connection with the above, the following is worth mentioning:

- Upgrading seaside and tourist areas: Valletta, Qui-si-Sana; St George's Bay, St Julian's, Paceville, Ta' Xbiex and Kennedy Grove;
- Embellishing village core areas: Rabat, Paola and Fgura;
- Harvesting of Storm Water: Pembroke and Salini.

Other contracts awarded during 2009 included works and services connected with projects required by various ministries and departments. Details of such contracts follow:

- *Office of the President*: 4 contracts connected with refurbishing of The Palace, Valletta and San Anton Palace amounting to €111,508
- *Joint Office*: 1 contract amounting to €29,128
- *MEUSAC Offices*: 5 contracts amounting to €90,384
- *Institute for Tourism Studies*: 1 contract amounting to €6,324
- *National Statistics Office*: 1 contract amounting to €27,512

The above information does not include tenders co-financed by the EU regarding Restoration of Fortifications in Malta and Gozo.

REGISTRY SECTION

The function of the Registry Section within such a large organisation as is MRRA is of paramount importance. On 1 July 2009, four Registries, mainly Main Registry Ex-MRES – responsible for the Works Division, Registry at the former DCS at the Ex- MRAE, Ex-Permanent Secretary Registry MRAE and Ex-Permanent Secretary Registry Ex-MRES were effectively amalgamated and transferred to new premises at Block A.

As of July, files started being issued under a new cover. As the amalgamation was in process, steps were taken in order that the running of daily requirements were provided and eventually be possible that Section continued to run smoothly. Files at the archives at St Christopher Street Valletta, formerly Ex MRAE premises, were transferred to Stores. Archives were dismantled and are to be fixed and organised at the Registry Premises.

The following table provides all transaction carried out by the Registry Section:

Files In for Movement	29,029
Not WD files for distribution	571
Files Referred BU	681
Files Referred PA	2,188
Requested files from PA	740
Main files opened	1,342
Part files opened	1,263
For files opened	10
Volume of files opened	24
Memos issued	210
Internal memos issued and circulated	65
Circulars distributed only	52
Postage	24,510
GSPOs for Mail €	7391.83
Mail to government departments	2,739
Mail In from sections to other sections	9,818
Mail received from Maltapost	11,113
Mail distributed to sections concerned	10,137
Registered mail	237

PIERRE PACE

Director (Financial Management)

Information Management Unit

ICT BUDGETING AND BUSINESS PLAN

The scope of the Information Management Unit (IMU) is to enable the Ministry to develop policies that will help integrate information technologies into the activities of its stakeholders and the society in general and also to harness the full potential for effective development driven by appropriate technological innovations and providing data management support.

The IMU was responsible for the planning and provision of ICT services to assist the Ministry to function effectively and efficiently in line with Government ICT policy. The Chief Information Officer (CIO) consolidated the ICT planning within the Ministry and managed the overall ICT capital and operational budgets. The Ministry's overall IT allocation for 2009 was of €721,000. While core services were funded centrally, the CIO administered and managed the contract with the Malta Information Technology Agency (MITA) for the rest of the maintenance and support facilities and software applications. In the course of its activities, most of the time the IMU liaised closely with MITA.

The Office of the CIO worked actively to implement a software application holistic approach across all the Ministry business areas. The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) reform and the Paying Agency were having a considerable impact on the whole ICT business of the Ministry. A huge chunk of the allocated funds were absorbed by the support and maintenance of the Paying Agency System developed by ABACO Srl under an EU Twinning Agreement. Particular attention was given to the Fisheries and Veterinary Departments in order to bring these in line with this holistic approach.

Other important and active sectors within MRRA are the Works and Services Divisions. A major project caters for the national calculation methodology for the implementation of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive 2002/91EC. This service will provide certifiers (architects and engineers) to register and issue Energy Performance Certificates for buildings in Malta. The part that covers domestic residences is in an advanced state of development and will be launched in the first quarter of 2010. It is expected that the section that will cater for commercial buildings will be finalised later on during the year.

Following feedback gathered from the Directors and Heads of Sections, the ICT Capital and Operational Budgeting Plan for 2010 was drawn up and presented to MITA.

The CIO represented the Ministry at monthly CIO Council meetings and monthly fora. During the course of the year, the CIO and staff from his office chaired or were members on various adjudication boards relating to the acquisition/disposal of hardware and software by the Ministry and its departments. The CIO chaired the Fisheries ICT Steering Committee and the European Fisheries Fund (EFF) ICT Steering Committee. The Office of the CIO was continuously involved in the ICT consolidation drive for government entities that fall under the Ministry, namely WasteServ (Malta) Ltd, the Malta Resources Authority (MRA), the Malta Council for Science and Technology (MCST) and the Building Industry Consultative Council (BICC).

REORGANISATION OF THE OFFICE OF THE CIO

Following the amalgamation of practically two ministries under the Ministry for Resources and Rural Affairs (MRRA) in March 2008, the Office of the CIO embarked to reorganise its setup and staff

complement. The Office moved from Barriera Wharf, Valletta, to the new ministry's headquarters in Floriana. The Office of the CIO is currently made up of the CIO, an ICT Governance Officer, a Management Information Systems Officer and three support officers. In 2009 MITA commissioned a private audit firm to carry out a study regarding the setup and roles of the Offices of the CIO.

A ministry-wide exercise was undertaken to reorganise all the employees' e-mail aliases and properties to reflect the current Ministry's organisational structure. The considerable and continuous staff movements and organigram alterations make this and similar issues an on-going painstaking exercise. The set-up of government corporate software applications, such as DocReg and DAS, and network shared folders have been scrupulously revised to the new requirements. Wherever possible and financially viable, unified telephony services were implemented to drastically reduce the cost of telephone calls. Statistical audits are regularly carried out and results forwarded to the Financial Management Department. This is an area where considerable savings can be effected, especially when one considers that the average daily cost of fixed calls by the Ministry is €2,500. The IMU intends to exploit further enhancements and measures that will improve the telephony system's efficiency and cost effectiveness.

IT PROJECTS

In 2009, the IMU undertook the initiative to coordinate and consolidate various ICT applications in use within MRRA. AutoCAD is one of the applications that are heavily used by the Works and Services Divisions but is also used in other departments of MRRA. The ministry was incurring a hefty annual subscription for the yearly upgrades of the software licences. The main objective of this project was the consolidation of all ACAD licences onto one central server. This improved the distribution and created controlled and auditable environment for the use of this software. Considerably savings amounting to thousands of euros related to the traditional annual upgrades were saved. Similar efforts have been pushed forward with regard to Geographic Information System (GIS) applications currently used in several departments of the ministry. MITA were involved and the project was escalated towards planning a consolidated environment for the whole of Government (all ministries) for these applications.

The Energy Performance Certificates for Buildings (EPC) project is in its final stages of development. Phase 1 of this project is undergoing quality assurance testing at MITA and is expected to go live in the first quarter of 2010. The Office of the CIO ensured that the project kept in line with Government ICT policy and standards and coordinated business between the supplier, MITA and the Services Division.

The IMU monitored also the Meat Traceability System developed for the Fish and Farming Regulation and Control Division. The system was procured by the division from CSB to bring processes at the Civil Abattoir in line with EU regulations. Several difficulties are being encountered during the implementation of this system. It is expected that the system goes live early in 2010.

MITA were advising that support of the Works Planning System (WPS) was to be divested onto the Office of the CIO. It transpired that the WPS was not being used by the Construction and Maintenance Department (CMD) as it did not meet all their needs. The requirements of the system were revised in order to meet the CMD business needs. The IMU ensured that all the department's requirements were captured during the re-analysis phase and the system is currently in an advanced stage of development by a third party supplier.

During 2009, the Office of the CIO issued Requests for Information (RFIs) for two other major projects, namely the Plant Health Department – Laboratory Management Information Systems and the Fisheries Department Information Systems. A tender was also issued for the Pitkali Markets Management Systems. The latter is currently under adjudication.

NETWORKS

All the remaining hubs in network cabinets throughout the Ministry were upgraded with faster intelligent switches. Other sites (Valletta Rehabilitation Project offices, Marsa Garage, PARC Unit Stores Section and Government Farm Applications Block) were upgraded to fibre optic connectivity in order to enhance their performance. Several local area network (LAN) extensions were implemented to meet the various departmental requirements. The IMU was responsible for the commissioning of a number of public WiFi access spots. These include ones in Pjazza Sant'Anna in Sliema, Pjazza San Ġorġ in Valletta, Ta' Qali Adventure Park and Salini Park.

IT AUDITS

During 2009, the Internal Audit and Investigations Directorate carried out an IT audit for the EU certification of the Paying Agency. The IMU and MITA were heavily involved and also targeted during this audit. As a result, the IMU enhanced the Paying Agency Management System (PAMS) and related applications password security features and is drafting/planning new procedures to adhere to EU Commission standards and requirements.

On the other hand, the Office of the CIO conducted two separate internal IT audits which were conducted on "Network Shared Folders User Access" and "AutoCAD usage". Usage to all the network shared folders within the MRRA was analysed and updated accordingly through MITA. The audit helped to confirm the validity of the data stored in the folders and strengthened security by restricting unauthorised access to such folders.

After the ACAD licences were consolidated into one server, an audit was conducted to assess the actual usage of licences. The audit was conducted over a period of one month and gave clear statistical results on how many ACAD licenses were being used simultaneously, who was using the application and which are the usage peak times during the day. The results of this audit will help manage these licences in a more efficient and cost effective way.

In conjunction with the PC Leasing exercise that was completed in 2009 for MRRA, an Exemption and Waiver Form procedure was introduced by MITA. The IMU was responsible to audit software that was non government standard software but was business specific. The Office of the CIO ensured that this software was licensed and adhered to government software policies prior to forwarding the required waiver forms to MITA for their evaluation.

E-SERVICES

The new E-Fisheries and E-Veterinary web portals, that will help fishermen and farmers to facilitate their business through online registration and document processing, are now being reviewed by MITA Quality Assurance Team and in their final stages of development. These are expected to be launched in first quarter 2010.

The Office of the CIO continually strives to keep the various websites updated. Two websites, namely the Fish and Farming Regulation & Control website and the Resources Website, were drastically revamped to best fit the new requirements of the Ministry. The Agriculture website was also enhanced. Prices of vegetables and fruit selling at the Pitkali Market were put online and also available through an RSS feed.

IT TRAINING AND CONFERENCES

The ICT Governance officer in the IMU attended an induction course for ICT Governance Officers conducted by MITA. The ICT and support officers within the IMU furthered their IT studies through the IDCIS diploma and BCIS degree courses. These are very valuable assets for the IMU. Staff also attended various seminars regarding virtualisation environments and unified communications.

During 2009, the CIO attended two sessions of the Panta Rhei Conference for European Paying Agencies. In March he attended the conference in Edinburgh, Scotland, while the 36th Panta Rhei conference was held in October, in Brasov, Romania.

OTHERS

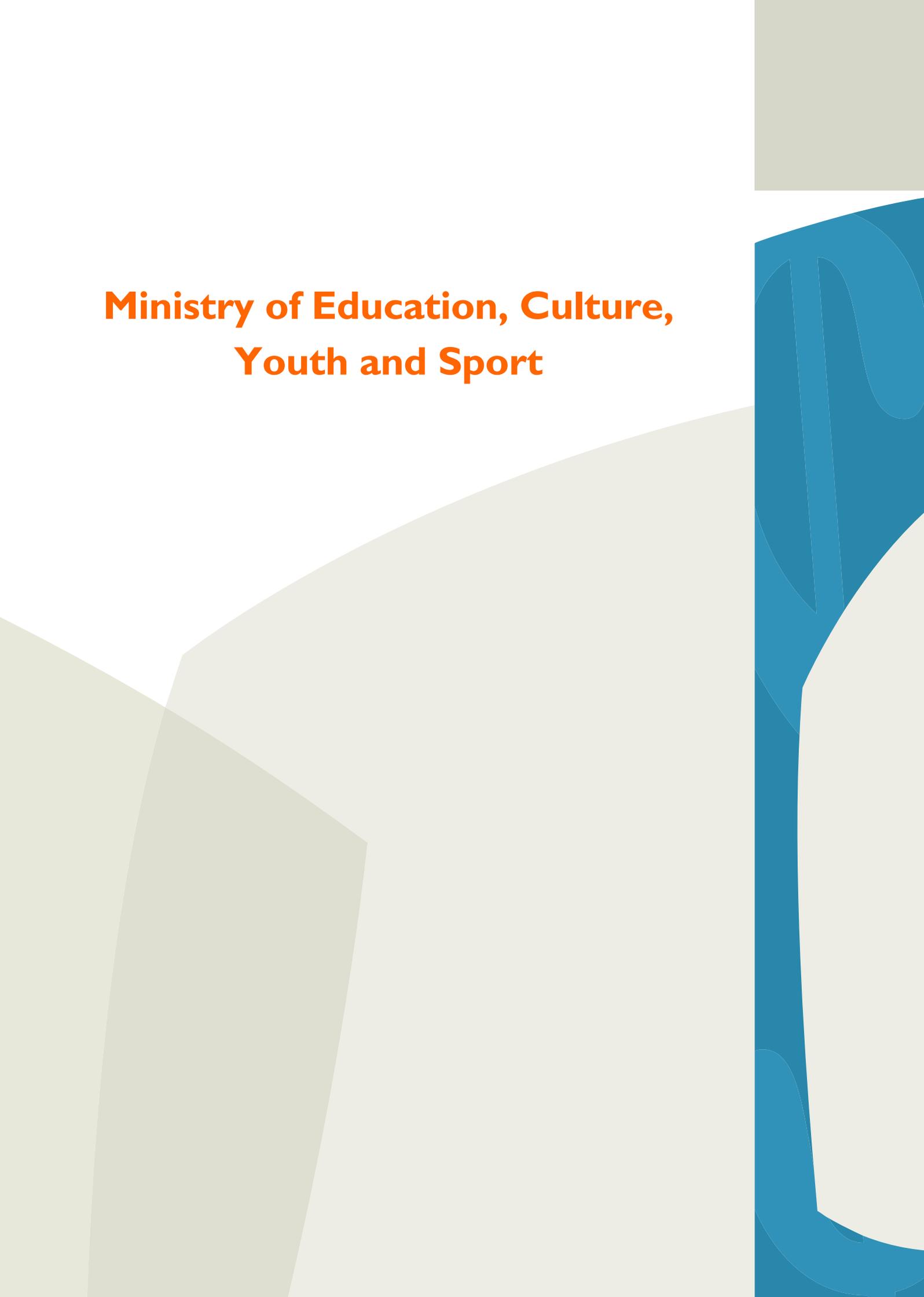
In line with Government's PC Leasing Enterprise Agreement, all PCs at MRRA were replaced with leased machines. In all, 950 computers and laptops were exchanged. The IMU supervised and effectively coordinated all these transactions between MITA and the hardware supplier. The replacements were thus effected in a very orderly and consistent manner without any interruptions to the business continuity of the Ministry.

Besides telephony, an area incurring heavy expenses by the Ministry is the supply of printing consumables, i.e. ink cartridges and toners. To curb on this expenditure, the IMU drafted and adopted a printer policy procedure for the Ministry. The IMU staff researched and evaluated several options and scenarios, and statistical results showed that procuring multifunction printers with a full service maintenance agreement was the best viable solution in replacing desktop printers. These multifunction printers offer a vast range of functions and features, including security ones, and could be shared by users over the network. The printer policy was sent to MITA for review and eventual adoption for the whole of government.

The adoption of teleworking by several staff members at MRRA created issues that also had to be tackled and solved by the IMU. The IMU had to cater for the provision of portable equipment, connectivity and relevant ICT services to all teleworking personnel.

GEORGE FALZON
Chief Information Officer

**Ministry of Education, Culture,
Youth and Sport**

The background features abstract, overlapping geometric shapes. A large, light beige shape dominates the lower half. A dark blue shape is positioned on the right side, partially overlapping the beige one. A lighter blue shape is also visible, overlapping the dark blue one. The overall composition is clean and modern.

Office of the Permanent Secretary

The Permanent Secretary is responsible for providing support and advice to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport and ensuring the implementation of major projects, policy formulation and direction, sectoral strategic and business plan development and amending and drafting legislation. He is also responsible for providing leadership and contributing to the collective management of Government, particularly by contributing to discussions on major government policies and providing long-term, strategic direction.

The Permanent Secretary is responsible for all the departments, units and entities falling within the remit of the Ministry with direct responsibility for the Youth Section and the Institute of Tourism Studies.

YOUTH SECTION

The Youth Section promotes various initiatives and events to support and encourage young people in becoming responsible individuals and active members of society, while helping them achieve their personal and social development. The Youth Section works to make provisions for young people's basic and social needs.

Youth Policy

The Youth Section was involved in the consultation process related to the drafting of the National Youth Policy. This process involved efforts to create a platform where personnel within this section coordinated various initiatives that were carried out as part of the consultation process. These initiatives included outreaching by means of an informative booth and dissemination of questionnaires that were sent via facebook, mail shots and the Education website. Personnel within this section compiled information and provided feedback that was eventually passed on to the working committee responsible for the drafting of the policy. Following the launching of the draft policy, the youth section organised different informal meetings with national NGOs to discuss the contents of the policy. The youth section also had the responsibility to coordinate the translation, design and publication of this policy.

Youth Agency

The Youth Section is also participating in the process of setting up the national agency. The National Youth Policy will be the guide for the youth agency to implement and coordinate work that is related to young people. The existing youth section will be incorporated within the agency so as to ensure continuation in the work that is being carried out. Furthermore, the youth agency will create further projects and initiatives that would promote young people's active participation and inclusion. The agency will also embark on research projects that would enable policy makers to take informed decisions regarding young people.

Youth Empowerment Programme

Throughout the last year, the Youth Section focused on the establishment and consolidation of the Youth Empowerment Programme on a National Level. These initiatives included:

Youth Local Councils

The Youth Local Councils project is a project that is administered by the Youth Section in collaboration with Kunsill Nazzjonali taż-Żgħażaġh (KNŻ). This project provides young people aged between 14 and 17 years with an opportunity to participate in a structured dialogue. The participants were trained and assisted to acquire the necessary skills and competences that could be used during the duration of the project. Participants were also acquainted with the running of a local council.

More than 100 young people are participating in this experience that will include various efforts including research, public consultations, and conduction of plans of actions. A total sum of €70,000 is being invested in favour of this project.

Literature Contest

The Literature Contest is a new project that the Youth Section embarked on as part of the Youth Empowerment Programme. Through this contest, the youth section in collaboration with the *Kunsill Nazzjonali tal-Ktieb* created an opportunity to increase literature that is addressed towards adolescents. Two awards will be granted at the end of this project that will include an overall winner and an award for the most promising young writer. The latter will be assigned an established publishing house to assist him/her to improve the quality of his/her work to be up to publishing standard.

Youth Parliament

The Youth Section supported KNŻ with the youth parliament initiative. Through this project, young people have the opportunity to debate on several issues within the set up of the National Parliament. This opportunity enabled young people to prepare different arguments and motions that were eventually presented during the sittings of the youth parliament.

National Youth Week

Between 8 and 11 October, the Youth Section was involved in the organisation of the National Youth Week. This year's edition included 44 different activities that were carried out at the Valletta Waterfront. The activities involved 17 different NGOs who organised different activities for young people.

This event included a total of 12 hours of music, 24 hours of dancing and 22 hours of sport. Other activities included drama, discussions and seminars. This event was held with the support of the KMS Sport Promotion Unit.

Tools Programme for Youth People in collaboration with Local Councils

As part of the Youth Empowerment Programme on a local level, the Youth Section worked on the drafting of a number of new programmes through which young people and their organisations will be provided with different types of training. These will be made available to all local councils and will be partially financed by Government.

Youth Information Centre

During the past year, personnel within the Youth Section embarked on an exercise with the aim of collecting information related to young people and which may be useful in their everyday life. This information will be accessible through a website which will be launched during this year. Furthermore the information will also be available through a handbook that will be distributed following the launching of this project. The information collected will also serve as a tool for youth workers to be able to deliver accurate information to young people during their course of work. This project is paving the way for the

establishment of a youth information centre, which will also conduct an outreach exercise within different setups including schools etc.

Youth Specialisation Studies Scheme

The Youth Specialisation Studies Scheme is a joint venture between the Parliamentary Secretariat for Youth and Sport and APS Bank Ltd. It is aimed at financially assisting young people who wish to pursue their studies abroad if such studies are not available in Malta.

The loan is repaid over a period of 10 years including a moratorium on capital repayments of five years depending on the duration of the academic course to be followed. A total of 33 applications were received by the 15th June 2009 deadline, out of which 22 were selected by a Credentials Committee. The Youth Section's total expenditure for the subsidised interest for 2009 was €11,000.

Youth Support Programme

Following the evaluation that was carried out last year, through this programme the youth section invested in a number of projects that were aimed at helping the holistic development of young people.

Amongst these projects the Youth Section entered into a partnership with the Maltese Scouts Association to set up a High Ropes Park at Ghajn Tuffieha. Through this partnership, the facility will be made available to all youth organisations interested in conducting different educational activities.

Through the Youth Support Programme the Xghajra Scouts were assisted to participate in an exchange that was carried out with an Irish Youth Group. This exchange was financed by the Edgar Otto Thedens Bequest Irish Fund and 10 young people from Xghajra Scouts benefited from this opportunity.

The Pastoral and Liturgy Youth Group (PLYG) participated in a leadership training programme that was provided by the Youth Section. This programme was organised before the commencement of the summer school that this youth group organised within their locality. Around 30 young people participated in this training programme.

The Youth Section also supported a number of other youth organisations to find venues to organise projects or activities targeted for young people. A number of organisations are also seeking other available government properties to be leased, in order to establish a base within them. The Youth Section is also assisting these organisations in finding premises and to speed up the process and sign lease deeds.

Youth Hostels

The Youth Section has been entrusted with the management of the Marsaxlokk Youth Hostel and Villa Psaignon. These premises will be used by youth organisations for the purpose of organising live-ins, youth exchanges, and other activities besides exchanges organised by state schools and other programmes that are currently undertaken at the M'Xlokk Hostel. Maintenance and repair works are already being undertaken at the Marsaxlokk Youth Hostel to make it more accessible. Further works will be continued during the time to come, at both the M'Xlokk Youth Hostel and Villa Psaignon.

Youth Conference

A youth conference was organised in collaboration with the European Union Programmes Agency on the occasion of the 5th anniversary of Malta's accession within the European Union. Through this conference that was held during May 2009, members of youth organisations had the opportunity to learn more about the Youth-In-Action Programme and how to apply for EU funded projects. During this conference several youth organisations were awarded contracts for projects that were going to be carried out during 2009.

Youth Organisations Network

The Youth Section is also in process of updating information related to youth organisations and agencies, both locally and abroad. This exercise will allow the youth section to periodically update youth organisations with different opportunities that will arise from time to time. Furthermore, the youth section will be publishing an electronic newsletter which will include articles with general information that could be useful for young people, their organisations and youth workers.

EKCYP

The virtual European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy (EKCYP) aims to provide the youth field with an entry point to access knowledge and information on the realities of youth across Europe. The EKCYP is supported by a European wide network nominated by the member state ministries responsible for youth policy. The Youth Section has a Maltese correspondent who drafts and updates the Maltese country sheet and answers questionnaires on the topics of Participation, Information, Voluntary Activities and a Better Understanding of Youth.

European Network of Experts on Youth Knowledge

The European Network of Experts on Youth Knowledge was initiated by the Directorate of Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe in 1993. Since 2003, the network has been coordinated within the Partnership between the Council of Europe and the European Commission in the field of youth.

The research network consists of representatives of the member states of the Council of Europe and the signatories of the Cultural Convention. The Ministry is represented through the youth section by a Maltese researcher who exchanges information on recent developments in youth research within the Maltese context.

EU Working Group on the Implementation of the Council Recommendation on Mobility of Young Volunteers across the EU

On 20 November 2008 the Council adopted a Recommendation on the Mobility of Young Volunteers across Europe. This Recommendation aims at fostering the mobility of young volunteers throughout the EU through the creation of more opportunities for young people to volunteer in another EU country than their own. The Czech Presidency, with the support of the Commission, organised a conference in March 2009 in Prague, to kick off the implementation of the Recommendation. As a result of the conference, the Commission proposed to set up a Working Group on the implementation of the Council Recommendation. The Youth Section is represented in the working group. The first meeting was held in October 2009.

EU Working Group for the Development of Indicators about the state of Youth in Member States.

The new EU Strategy on Youth endorsed by the Council invites the Commission to establish a Working Group on Indicators in 2010. A working group has been set up to discuss, in consultation with relevant policy areas, existing data on the situation of young people and the possible need for development of indicators in fields where they do not exist, or where no youth perspective is apparent. Proposals shall be submitted for consideration by the Council no later than December 2010. The working group should propose a dashboard of already existing indicators in the areas of education, employment, social inclusion and health. This means that the working group must get an insight into the already existing indicators in these different fields, and agree on a selected number of indicators to be included into a dashboard.

Secondly, the working group should elaborate on an overview of possible new indicators in "core" youth policy areas where they do not yet exist. These areas include youth participation, volunteering, creativity and culture, youth in the world and for young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs). In

order to do this, it should explore already existing cross-country research on indicators and be presented with examples of good practice in different Member States. The Youth Section also has a representative on this working group.

Youth Working Party

EU Member States develop their own national youth policies, and, at EU level, they have set up a framework for cooperation. The most prominent role is played by the Council of Youth Ministers where all the decisions are taken. The Youth Working Party, composed of representatives from the youth ministries in Member States, prepares the meetings of the Council. The Youth Section advises the Parliamentary Secretariat regarding all the work done within the youth working party.

DG Meetings and Youth Events

The Youth Section participated in two DG meetings and youth events that were held in Prague and Stockholm. During these meetings, representatives from EU, EFTA and candidate countries discussed themes of EU Youth Strategy Communication and Future EU Cooperation in the Youth Field.

The youth event's workshops held in Prague covered 5 fields of actions: 1) Volunteering and education, 2) Participation, outreach, information and Youth in the World, 3) Evidence based policy making 4) Employability, entrepreneurship, fostering talents and creativity 5) Social inclusion and health. This event included a round table meeting with Directors General and was followed by a DG meeting on June 5.

INSTITUTE OF TOURISM STUDIES (ITS)

The Institute of Tourism Studies provides vocational education of a high standard. It seeks to identify customer needs, monitors customer satisfaction and is responsible for providing the tourism industry with personnel trained to international standards. The Institute of Tourism Studies:

- provides opportunities for work experience in industry;
- recreates actual working environments on campus;
- provides training in a comprehensive range of practical skills;
- develops and enhances the intellectual ability of its students through a wide range of academic subjects;
- teaches generic skills essential for a smooth transition into the world of work;
- continuously monitors students' progress through tutors, review boards and internal and external examiners.

The Institute of Tourism Studies offers the following programmes of study:

- Higher Diploma in Hospitality and Tourism Management;
- Diploma/Certificate in Hotel Operations;
- Diploma/Certificate in Accommodation Operations;
- Certificate/Diploma in Travel Agency Operations;
- Diploma in Tour Guiding;
- Diploma/Certificate in Food Preparation and Production and Supervisory Studies;
- Diploma/Certificate in Food and Beverage Service and Supervisory Studies;
- Extended Skill Training Scheme (Hospitality Trades);
- School Incorporated Scheme (Pilot Project).

There are 564 registered full-time students attending the Institute of Tourism Studies for the academic year 2009/10 together with more than 500 part-time students. Students from 27 different nations attend the Institute.

International Internships

99 students commenced their international internship in July 2009. Students were placed in the following countries: England and Scotland 45; Ireland 4; Isle of Man 8; Jersey 10; Italy 11; Switzerland 3; and Brussels 4. 14 Foreign students are undertaking their internship in Malta.

ITS Graduates - 2009

Course of Studies

Higher Diploma in Hospitality Management	21
Diploma in Hotel Operations	15
Diploma in Travel Agency	5
Diploma in Accommodation Operations	6
Diploma in Culinary Arts	16
Diploma in Food and Beverage Service	1
Diploma in Tourist Guiding	3
Certificate in Hotel Operations	7
Certificate in Accommodation Operations	7
Certificate in Food Preparation and Production	1
Certificate in Food Preparation and Supervisory Studies	13

67 students completed their studies in Food Preparation and Service – Level 1 and 57 students completed their studies in the Extended Skills

Participation in EU Programmes

During 2009 the Institute of Tourism Studies participated in the following programmes:

- Interreg IIIA Italia – Malta Prisma Project (Integrated Relational Tourism);
- Leonardo Da Vinci – International Mobility: Professional Training Internship in Hospitality and Tourism
- Leonardo Da Vinci – Travel Agents – Incentive Travel and Development
- Leonardo Da Vinci – Sustainable Tourism
- Leonardo Da Vinci – Gaining awareness through deeper insights into the art of Hospitality through the International Internship.
- Comenius Project – Food – Healthy Youth in a future Europe;
- Erasmus – Staff Teaching Assignments, Staff Training, Student Mobility Study and Student Placement Mobility

DR CHRISTOPHER BEZZINA

Permanent Secretary

Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education

The Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education (DQSE) led by Director General Dr Grace Grima is composed of two Departments, the Curriculum Management and eLearning Department and the Quality Assurance Department.

CURRICULUM MANAGEMENT AND ELEARNING DEPARTMENT

The Curriculum Management and eLearning Department (CMeLD) was responsible, during the year under review, for the management and financial aspect of the branches falling under the department.

Five Assistant Directors within the Department were allocated the following areas of responsibility:

- assessment for Learning, focusing mainly on training teachers of Year 4 in formative assessment as part of the preparation of teachers in view of the current reform on the transition from Primary to Secondary;
- teaching of Languages and organisational responsibility for Literacy and Inclusion especially in the Early Years;
- coordination of work involved in the teaching and learning of the Humanities (Social Studies, History, Personal and Social Development, Citizenship, Democracy, Human Rights Education, Media and Communication, Religion, Art, Drama, Music and Physical Education);
- Training and Professional Development;
- Summative Examinations and the Educational Assessment Unit and for Mathematics and Science (Mathematics, ICT, Integrated Science, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Geography, Computer Studies, Home Economics and Textiles Studies, ICT, Design and Technology and Graphical Communication).

During the year under review, the CMeLD increased the number of Assistant Directors and Education Officers. The CMeLD now has Education Officers in the Early Childhood Sector and in the Primary and Secondary Sectors. In the Primary Sector there are Education Officers for the following areas: English, Maltese, Science, Social Studies, Religion, Personal and Social Development. Mathematics is being serviced notwithstanding the absence of an Education Officer in this area. There are also Education Officers for Music, Art, Drama, Documentation, Media Education, Physical Education and Sport, eLearning and Inclusion service both the Primary and the Secondary Sectors. In the Secondary Sector Education Officers for Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Mathematics, English, Maltese, Italian, French, Arabic, History, Personal and Social Development, Social Studies, Religion, Design and Technology and Computer Studies are currently providing their services within the Department.

While the work of the CMeLD was focused on the key areas represented within the Department, namely assessment, classroom support related to teaching and learning, provision of textbooks, teacher training together with input related to the eLearning, the Department collaborated with other government departments not only in connection with the eLearning strategy but also in other areas. Meetings were held with the Malta Tourism Authority to enable schools to be exposed to the hospitality industry. Meetings were also held with the Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Investment (MFEI) on Entrepreneurship on the one hand and the DQSE on the other. A one-day conference was jointly organised by the Ministry for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport and MFEI with presentations made by the Director Finance and the Director CMeLD.

During 2009, the Director CMeLD was actively involved in two major European projects, namely the ERDF Science Project and the ESF Parents and Teachers ICT Programme. He also provided input in a number of European Union Programmes Agency and Comenius projects. The Director CMeLD took an active part in two subject audits, one focusing on Design and Technology and the second one on Social Studies. Work on these audits will be finalised in 2010.

The Director CMeLD served as a representative of the Education Directorate on the MATSEC Board together with the Director General DQSE and two Assistant Directors.

The Director General DQSE and the Director CMeLD were actively involved in a number of key projects. These included the Curriculum Review project, the Core Competences project, the Science Strategy working group, the eLearning Strategy, the Transition from Primary to Secondary Schools in Malta and the preparation of a revised format of the Certificate awarded at the end of Secondary Education.

National Curriculum Review

In March 2008, a working group chaired by the Director General DQSE was set up to carry out a review of the National Minimum Curriculum and draw up a Curriculum Framework. The group included both directors of the DQSE, the Dean and Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Education, the Chairman of the Matsec Board, and the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of the Private Schools Association, and a representative of the Independent Schools Association, and joined during 2009, by two, College Principals and a Service Manager, the Head of St Elias College, and a ministry representative.

The Curriculum review has three major objectives, namely to:

- revisit the principles and objectives of the National Curriculum in the light of recent changes affecting Malta;
- present a Curriculum Framework that emphasises educational practices that are major sources of influence on teaching and learning;
- ensure that direction is given and action is encouraged, supported and maintained at the level of Colleges and schools.

Meetings have been held with College Principals, Assistant Directors, Education Officers and Heads of School, State and Non-State. It is planned that the Curriculum Framework will be drafted for discussion and consultation with stakeholders in 2010.

Core Competences Working Group

In January 2009 the Core Competences working group published a National Policy and an implementation strategy of the policy regarding the acquisition of core competences. The core competences cover three main areas, namely: Literacy, Mathematics and eLiteracy (Digital Literacy). The aim of the policy and the strategy is to ensure that all Maltese children acquire the above mentioned competences by not later than Year 3 of primary education. Among other things, checklists have been proposed for each of the three competences at Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3 levels. These checklists will help educators identify children at risk at an early stage. Consequently educators will be in a position to provide appropriate support for as long as it is needed. This will enable children to access the full curriculum and become lifelong learners. The policy and the strategy emphasise the need for all stakeholders to cooperate and coordinate their work for the benefit of the child. The stakeholders include teachers, schools and other educational leaders, parents and the community at large. This initiative is one among a number of measures taken to improve the quality of our educational services. It will enhance student achievement and raise the national standard.

A National Strategy for Science Education in Malta

The objective of the strategy group is to formulate a national strategy for science education in Malta for students in primary and secondary schools and beyond. The group is chaired by the Director General DQSE and includes the following members who are working on three different areas:

- *Group 1* – Science for Early Years and Primary Schools: Director, Curriculum Management and eLearning, Education Officer Primary, together with four members of the Faculty of Education.
- *Group 2* – Science for Secondary Schools: Education Officer Chemistry, Education Officer Biology, Education Officer Integrated Science, Head of Department, representatives from the Church Schools, the Malta Association for Science Education, and the MATSEC Board,
- *Group 3* – Current International Trends in Science Education: Director General DQSE, Education Officer Physics, representatives from the Faculty of Education and Independent Schools.

The committee, set up in October 2008, continued to review the current situation of science education in Malta and proposed a comprehensive national strategy for the enhancement of science literacy. This strategy is intended to cater for:

- the scientific needs of students at both primary and secondary levels;
- students with different learning abilities;
- students who wish to further their study of science subjects beyond compulsory education;
- the development of science literacy for all;
- opportunities for lifelong learning.

In 2009, the committee worked on the drawing up of a document that will propose a national plan for science education. This document will be disseminated amongst all stakeholders for public consultation. Analysis of the feedback from the consultation process will be used by the committee to issue a final amended version of the strategy document. The committee researched the current situation of science education in local Primary and Secondary Schools; reviewed EU policies related to science education; and compiled a draft strategy document. The work of the committee will be finalised in 2010.

The eLearning Strategy

During 2009 the CMELD continued to carry out the implementation of the eLearning Strategy. The refreshing of computers and laptops together with connectivity in a number of schools was carried out. High level discussions with MTA on the implementation of a strategy related to the business needs of the eLearning Platform were carried out. This strategy aims to give learners the most sophisticated tools available. It also aims to equip educators with the resources they need to be able to effectively engage learners. The Department was also actively involved in carrying out compulsory Professional Development Training Sessions for all teachers in eLearning.

Transition from Primary to Secondary Schools in Malta

In November 2008, the document *Transition from Primary to Secondary Schools in Malta: A review* was launched and a public consultation process commenced. This was extended to mid-February 2009. The DQSE worked on a strategy of implementation together with major stakeholders within the Directorate and beyond.

Eleven public consultation meetings, chaired by the Director General DQSE and Director CMELD, were held between November 2008 and January 2009 in ten Colleges in Malta and Gozo. There were members of the Educational Leaders Council in all of these meeting. Staff meetings in all Colleges (Primary and Secondary schools) were chaired by the respective Principals. The Director General DQSE participated in several of these meetings. There were also meetings with all Heads of School (State and Non-State) and

staff and students from the Faculty of Education. The Director CMELD and the Director General DQSE participated in radio and television broadcasts and wrote newspaper articles on the issue in question.

In November 2009 the educational reform was launched by the Minister.

School Leaving Certificate

The DQSE published a new format for the School Leaving Certificate awarded at the end of Secondary Schooling. The aim of the certificate is to recognise the value of all the aspects of the achievement of the students during the five years of secondary schooling. The certificate is cumulative. It recognises five particular aspects namely formal education, that is, academic achievement taking into consideration teacher assessment as well as examination results; personal qualities; informal education; non formal education; and school attendance. This certificate recognises the importance of holistic education and gives due importance to the student's initiative and participation inside and outside school.

The process is chaired by the Director General DQSE and includes the Assistant Director Formative Assessment, Chief Executive Officer Malta Qualifications Council (MQC), Senior Manager Standards and Qualifications MQC, and a Service Manager. The Certificate carries the endorsement of the Malta Qualifications Council. It is pitched at Level One, with students being awarded the grade within Level One according to their standard and achievement.

The new format of the School Leaving Certificate was launched in October 2009.

TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Professional Development Sessions

316 Professional Development Sessions were held after school hours, on themes chosen by Heads of School in conjunction with College Principals and with the CMELD. 3,737 participants attended these sessions during 2009.

In-Service Courses

- In-Service Courses for teachers and other teaching personnel were held during July and September 2009. A total of 79 different courses were offered in both sessions.
- 1,764 attended the July session and 1,128 attended the September session amounting to a total of 2,892 participants.
- Afternoon in-Service Courses for Primary School teachers were also organised between February and early June. These were attended by 827 Primary School teachers.

Other Courses

- Educators were also given the opportunity of attending conferences and seminars held locally which were sponsored, in part or in full, by the CMELD. These included:
 - *First International Conference on Strategic Innovation and Future Cohesion* and the Debono Seminar 2009, held between 23 and 27 March for Heads of School.
 - National Forum on Intercultural Dialogue held on 30 January and organised by the EU Projects for College Principals, Assistant Directors and Education Officers.
 - *Promoting Potential National Conference* held from 19 to 21 February, for Heads of School, Assistant Heads of School and Education Officers, organised by St Aloysius' College.
 - *The Future of Citizenship in the European Union* – Seminar held on 26 March organised together with Prof Shaw for Heads of School.
 - *When Educating is Difficult: Are Inclusive Schools the Answer?* Held on 30 April and 1 May organised by the Faculty of Education for Educators and Learning Support Assistants.

- International School Psychology Association Conference held on 7-11 July for Heads of School organised by the International School Psychology Association (ISPA) and the Union of Professional Psychologists (MUPP).
 - National Conference organised by St Nicholas College entitled *Nurture Groups - An early intervention approach for Primary Schools* held on 23 October.
 - Information Session on *Britlit* for teachers of both Primary and Secondary Schools, organised by the British Council and the BBC, held on 24 September.
 - Malta Qualifications Council's *National Conference on the Validation of Informal and Non-Formal Learning – Retooling for the Future* held on 15 December.
- The Director General DQSE and the CMELD were responsible for organising and funding local participants in the AEA-Europe International Conference on Assessment held in Malta in November.
 - 10 teachers and other educators also attended conferences abroad, including Council of Europe Seminars and training programmes initiated by the European Centre of Modern Languages.
 - A Council of Europe Workshop was held in Malta from 22 to 24 April, in which 11 foreign participants together with 28 local ones took part.
 - Training on Inclusion was also given to Education Officers.
 - Other courses were organised by the CMELD during the year including:
 - a course on Basic Skills was held for the second year, during school hours, for teachers in both Church and State Schools. Thirty two teachers participated in this course.
 - *A Java* Course was organised for teachers of Computer Studies in State and Church Schools.
 - ICT courses were organised during the months January-May and July-September. A total number of 370 educators were trained in an ICT related subject:

Course Title	No. of Participants
ECDL AM3	36
ECDL AM4	34
ECDL AM5	22
ECDL AM6	36
Using the Internet Effectively	27
Microsoft PowerPoint in the Classroom	37
eTwinning Online Collaborative Projects	24
Creating Classroom Resources using MS Word	26
Computer Awareness for Complete Beginners	7
Solving Simple Technical PC Problems	14
Photoshop Basics	25
Illuminatus	25
Introduction to SharePoint Designer	9
Java	12
Creating Presentations and Storybooks	8
Updating and Maintaining School Websites	10
Creating Resource Packs	9
Using New Simple Technologies	9
Total	370

STUDENT ASSESSMENT

During 2009, the Educational Assessment Unit carried out the following activities:

- coordinated the construction of annual examination papers, their printing and distribution - 465 different examinations were held, involving 436,484 examination booklets;

- organised the Junior Lyceum Entrance Examinations into Form 1 in May 2009. 3,196 students (456 were provided with access arrangements) sat for these examinations; 2,143 (67.05%) were successful in the May Session. Results were sent via SMS to candidates who opted for this service. There were 87 requests for revision of papers;
- organised the Re-sit Session of the Junior Lyceum Entrance Examination into Form 1 for 381 eligible candidates, of whom 57.7% made the grade. This figure brought the total pass rate for both May and July sessions to 73.8%.
- published the Junior Lyceum Entrance Examinations' Annual Report, which included detailed statistical information, a review of the examination procedure, copies of the examination papers, marking schemes, specification grids, an analysis of the examination items, the Chief Examiner's report on each paper and other general information;
- held various meetings with Heads of School and meetings/training sessions with Peripatetic teachers, as preparation for the Junior Lyceum examinations;
- conducted staff development sessions on Formative Assessment and the setting of examination papers;
- maintained the CMELD's website which included past examination papers, articles related to assessment, syllabi and other useful information;
- selected and preserved sample scripts (together with the corresponding Markers' Sheets) of the Junior Lyceum Examination 2009. The collections were based on specified criteria with a view to monitor standards over the years.

Assessment for Learning

The following are the main activities carried out by the Assistant Director for this area:

- Training in Assessment for Learning was conducted for all Year 4 State Primary teachers. Teachers from Church and Independent schools were also invited to attend. Thirty sessions were held, each of two hours' duration. Training in Assessment for Learning as well as in the development of oral skills in children is also being planned for Year 5 State Primary teachers and Years 4, 5 and 6 Church School teachers.
- Training in the implementation of Assessment for Learning was also held for newly appointed education officers. They were provided with power point presentations and other teaching and learning material.
- Three In-Service Courses were held for teachers on the implementation of Assessment for Learning. Two were held in July and one in September.
- Two groups of teachers (70 in all) were trained in examination paper setting. Between them they received 21 hours of training which included the formative use of tests and examinations. Moreover, meetings were held with teachers to vet Half Yearly Examination Papers. This served as training in examination paper setting.
- Several other training sessions were held in schools covering a variety of topics including effective pedagogical approaches, the reality of mixed ability classes, the acquisition of basic competences and the development of writing skills in children.
- For the ninth year running, Junior Lyceum Entrance Examination Scripts (English, Maltese, Mathematics, Social Studies and Religion) together with the corresponding Markers' Sheets were collected. These scripts serve as exemplars of children's work at different levels of achievement, and help to monitor standards.
- There was further development of the section entitled *Children's Writings* on the website of the CMELD. Twenty five compositions were included in the section.
- Another section on the website is entitled *Learning to Assess*. The aim of this section is to train students in peer and self-assessment. Students' works at Primary and Secondary levels are analysed and assessed. Twelve pieces were included in this section during the past year.
- An article was written for each issue of the publication entitled *Resources*. The published articles were the following: *Prediction* (January 2009), *Controlled Exercises: Matching* (April 2009), and *Assessment for Learning: Feedback* (October 2009).
- A study was prepared about the Assessment and Development of Babies/Toddlers from Birth to Age Three, intended to help parents and other educators in charge of babies and toddlers. The study will be published on the internet early in 2010.

- Meetings were held with a number of Heads of Church Schools on issues related to assessment and curriculum development.
- The Working Group set up to introduce the assessment of the oral component in Maltese and English at Primary level has been planning ahead during the year, training teachers and providing them with the necessary resources.
- The document on the acquisition of Core Competences was launched on 27 January 2009. Articles were published in the local media so as to make the public sensitive to the importance of the document.
- The Assistant Director for Assessment for Learning was fully involved in the Educational Reform. Delivered radio talks and published articles in local newspapers; trained Customer Care officials in the proposed reforms so that they would be able to answer questions of the general public received on free phone 1571; received and answered emails; attended meetings with parents and professionals and analysed and evaluated all the feedback received during the three months consultation period (November 2008 – February 2009) so as to prepare a report highlighting the salient points. Researched and wrote the script for a documentary used during the Launch of the Educational Reform held on 25 November at St Benedict College Mqabba Primary School.
- He also helped in the organisation of the AEA-Europe International Conference on Assessment held in Malta in November.
- The Assistant Director, Assessment for Learning, was an active member of the team that drew up the new format of the School Leaving Certificate which was inaugurated on 14 October. The local media was used to enhance the educational significance of the Certificate.

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Textbooks

A meeting was held with teacher librarians in the secondary sector and Heads/Assistant Heads in the Primary sector the beginning of October. Requisition Order forms were distributed to all schools. The data received was recorded and orders were sent to the procurement office for onward transmission to the Director CMELD for the purchase of textbooks needed. This also involved the vetting of all requests in order to avoid any hoarding or unnecessary buying of books. School visits ensued in order to clear any problems that could have cropped up in the process. A committee of teacher librarians was set up to discuss matters concerning textbooks and meetings were held with the Education Officer concerned. There was a constant link also with the Director CMELD and the Stores Section of the Directorate to ensure a smooth running in the provision of books. Funds for the buying of English and Italian reading books that are not provided by the Department, were sent to all schools in the Secondary Sector.

Books procured during 2009 for the Primary Sector amounted to a cost of € 387,795.10 while those for the Secondary Sector were € 383,522.71.

Resources Newsletter

There were three issues with diverse themes this year.

European Year of Creativity and Innovation

The National Coordinator for the 2009 European Year of Creativity and Innovation was appointed in June 2008. After some preliminary discussions with people interested in forming part of a coordination team, regular meetings were held with government and private entities willing to participate in activities to celebrate the Year. The official logo of the European Year for Creativity and Innovation was disseminated accordingly to public and private initiatives to be used on all media related to the event in question.

The team was in constant contact with the European Commission to provide information about significant events of interest to colleagues from other Member States. A member of the team attended training

seminars for all national coordinators organised by the Commission in February 2009. When the official European website create2009.europa.eu was launched, regular updates on national events and projects were sent to be published on the website.

Some of the main events for which the team was responsible include the Press Launch in February 2009 followed by an open day of creative and innovative activities on 1 March, at St James Cavalier. The event, *What's the big idea? Creativity and Innovation* attracted participants from both the public and the private sector and a number of cross-sectoral workshops. The team was the driving force behind Innovation Week in schools. The team, in collaboration with the Director CMELD came up with the idea of holding training sessions on Creative Entrepreneurship. Education Officers were encouraged to hold specific activities in relation to the theme of the year. Creativity and innovation featured in many subject specific activities.

Regular articles were published on the MEUSAC and CCP newsletters. The general public was reached through interviews on radio and television magazine, informative and cultural programmes which were and are still being held regularly. Moreover the awards for creativity in journalism, television, music, book, fashion, press, digital arts and engineering, sponsored by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, helped in promoting the year with the public at large.

United World Colleges (UWC)

The UWC Malta Committee held several meetings to discuss various issues including scholarships, summer courses and actual set up of the committee and the roles played by the different members. In February a circular, regarding a two-year scholarship at the College of the Adriatic, was sent to all State and Non-State Schools. Interviews were held and all documentation about the chosen candidate was sent to the College. This year the scholarship was funded by Mr Joe Gasan since UWC did not provide a fully funded scholarship. Another candidate was offered to attend a summer course organised by the French Committee. An annual report was drawn up and all questionnaires sent by the central office in London were duly filled. A member of the Committee attended the European Regional Meeting in Brussels in November where various important issues were discussed with representatives from various countries.

The Peripatetic Service

The peripatetic service encompasses the following areas: Complementary Education, Let Me Learn Programme, Literacy Support Teachers Core Competences, Literacy Support Teachers Whole School Approach, Malta Writing Programme, Specific Learning Difficulties Unit (SpLD), Personal and Social Development – Primary (for pupils in Year 4 to Year 6), Personal and Social Development – Thinking Skills, Personal and Social Development – Alcohol and Drugs Prevention, Art, Drama, Music, Physical Education and Sport, Science, Home Economics, Design and Technology, Birdlife, Ekoskola, EkoGozo.

With such multiple-faceted teams, the CMELD expanded its services to all Colleges and State Schools in the area of Literacy. A total of 490 persons applied for posts of peripatetic teachers, 305 of who were engaged. The following table shows the number of teachers in each area/programme/subject as at January and October 2009.

Teachers in the Peripatetic Service in Malta and Gozo				
Area/Programme/Subject	January 2009		October 2009	
	Malta	Gozo	Malta	Gozo
Complementary Education	67	10	69 ¹	10
Let Me Learn	3	Nil	3 ²	Nil
Literacy Tutors/Literacy Support Whole School Approach	3	1	8 ³	1
Literacy Tutors /Core Competences	Nil	Nil	6	Nil
Malta Writing Programme	4	Nil	4 ⁴	Nil
Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD)	8	Nil	9 ⁵	2 ⁵

Art	18	1	17	2
Drama	16	3	13	2
Music	16	4	12	6
PSD Peripatetic Primary	31	7	31	7
PSD Thinking Skills	6	Nil	3	Nil
PSD Alcohol and Drugs	4	Nil	Nil	Nil
Physical Education	32	6	24	2
eLearning (Peripatetic and Support)	Nil	Nil	39 ⁶	Nil
Science	18	3	18	3 ⁷
Home Economics	10	Nil	11	Nil
Design and Technology	11	Nil	6	Nil
Birdlife	Nil	Nil	1	Nil
Ekoskola	3	1	4	1
EkoGozo	Nil	Nil	Nil	1
Total	250	36	278	37

¹one on parental leave; ²one on study leave; ³one on parental leave who will be resuming duties in February 2010 and one was appointed Assistant Head in October, 2009; ⁴one on parental leave and one was appointed Education Officer; ⁵three on parental leave- two in Malta and one in Gozo; ⁶one was appointed Education Officer; ⁷two on parental leave.

Complementary Education

Complementary Education is an intervention programme for primary school learners who have not mastered the basic skills or who have fallen behind in the class literacy and mathematics programme. The purpose of Complementary Education is to help these pupils to fill gaps in their knowledge of written and spoken forms of words, meanings of words, and meaningful contexts in which words function; and develop interconnection between these kinds of knowledge.

Seventy-nine teachers (one on parental leave) provide the service for the following number of children:

Children & schools receiving the service January 2009			Children & schools receiving the service October 2009		
Number of Schools	Year (Class)	Total Number/% of Children	Number of Schools	Year (Class)	Total Number/% of Children
48	1	398 (23%)	10	1 ¹	39 (15%)
61	2	578 (25%)	61	2	628 (27%)
61	3	553 (25%)	61	3	537 (24%)
60	4	519 (20%)	61	4	522 (24%)
41	5	259 (24%)	48	5	434 (20%)
10	6	66 (23%)	23	6	118 (25%)
Total		2,373 (23%)	Total		2,278 (24%)

¹The number of children receiving Complementary Education in Year 1 increases in January.

Let Me Learn (LML)

The LML team in collaboration with the Education Officer for Inclusive Education contributed to the after school and the September In-service Courses. The Focus was on effective classroom practices with sessions on topics such as *Whereto*, *Low Prep Strategies* and *Tiering Assignments & Assessment*. The aim was to equip educators with skills on how to plan better, get to know more their students and their learning aptitudes, assess knowledge, revise and assign levelled work to cater for the different levels of learning readiness present within the same classroom.

A cohort made up of 80 educators started attending the LML Professional Training Process. Twenty-three educators out of these were Heads of Department and school administrators. The 75 trainees who completed the whole course and met the necessary requirements were certified as LML practitioners during a Certification Ceremony, themed *Teachers' Challenges in view of the Educational Reform*, held at the National Curriculum Centre, Ħamrun, in mid-June.

The LML team, in partnership with the University of Malta, held an International Forum on Learning. The conference provided an excellent opportunity for established scholars, education administrators, school leaders, teachers, policy makers and other stakeholders to present and discuss latest research, applications and innovations in the field of learning. It also facilitated national and international networking in the area.

During the evenings concurrent with the conference, the LML team met with the e-Spices partners present at the Forum on Learning in order to share the proceedings from former meetings in Perugia to the whole e-Spices team.

The LML team held in-service courses on differentiation at St Clare College Boys' Secondary Gzira and Savio College. The SMT of Savio College Dingli expressed the wish to start introducing both the LML ideology and practice in the school curriculum. As a result, a number of staff from Savio College has applied to attend to the 2010 LML Professional Training Process.

The LML team held two consecutive meetings with the SMT of St Aloysius College Birkirkara and the SMT of St Benedict College Safi Primary. Ways in which both schools could start infusing a policy for differentiation within their ethos were discussed. The SMT of St Aloysius College decided to start sending its staff gradually to the annual LML Professional Training Process.

The LML team took part in the 4th transnational meeting and training seminar of the e-Spices Grundtvig project held in Perugia, Italy. This particular training aimed to address the needs of the ever-increasing adults-in-mobility in contact with service providers mostly pertaining to bureaucratic-institutional contexts. The Maltese educators took part also in a one-day conference during which the LML team introduced the LML process to members of the Faculty of Education of the Università degli Studi di Perugia.

The LML team met with both St Ġorġ Preca College Paola Primary B SMT and the SMT of St Augustine College Pieta' in order to discuss a sustainable plan of action concerning the constant and continuous implementation of LML within the school. These meetings form part of the mentoring service offered annually after the previous year training in the LML process. This year mentoring is taking the form of a close collaboration with those schools who have introduced LML within their Staff Development Plan: supporting teaching staff in the preparation for, administration and validation of Learning Combination Inventories and eventually implementation of the process within their classrooms.

Other routine work such as the re-printing of inventories, the publishing of the fourth issue of *Netwerk*, review of LML stories, maintenance of the LML website etc. had to be taken care of.

The LML team made preparation for the 2010 LML Professional Training Process which will start in January 2010. Preparations included sorting out data of potential participants and notifying them about their attendance to the course, evaluating and refreshing course material and organising the portfolios to be handed at the initiation of the training.

School visits at Argotti Botanic Gardens

The CMELD worked in collaboration with the University of Malta, Argotti Herbarium and the University Gardens Section, to continue the initiative to sponsor educational visits to the Argotti Botanic Gardens. Visits of 1-1½ duration, accommodating a maximum of three sessions per day, were held.

During this scholastic year, the activity attracted 1,637 students, distributed as follows:

Primary Schools	
Year	No. of Students
1	96
2	197
3	504
4	159
5	44
6	141
Total	1,141

Secondary Schools	
Form	No. of Students
2	22
3	172
4	108
Total	302
Post Secondary	194

The Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD) Unit

Towards the end of 2009 the Head of Department was appointed Education Officer. The complement is of eleven members of staff, however two members have been out on parental leave during the last months. A third member of staff commenced parental leave at the end of 2009. The SpLD team also includes one clerk. The following is a summary of the work carried out during the year 2009:

- *Formal training for SpLD teachers:* Eight teachers employed at SpLD Service obtained a qualification through the University of Malta, in teaching learners with dyslexia. The course, sponsored by the CMELD, was held on a part-time basis over an eighteen-month period. A number of foreign and local experts in the area of dyslexia and learning difficulties were invited to contribute to this course.
- *Supporting Literacy teachers at SpLD Service:* The SpLD staff worked hand in hand with the literacy support teachers and put at their disposal the various resources and teaching aids. Also, much time was devoted to illustrating to the literacy support teachers the use of materials and the various multisensory teaching programmes available.
- *Training in Core Competences:* In January 2009, the MEDC launched the National Policy for the Attainment of Core Competences in Primary Education. In order to familiarise teachers with the Policy and the manner in which the Directorate planned to support teachers to ensure that all children develop the required literacy skills, the SpLD Service was given the responsibility to train all teachers in Years 1, 2 and 3. The SpLD staff was also asked to undertake the training of teachers in all ten Colleges and did so successfully between February and July 2009.
- *Junior Lyceum assessments:* During the scholastic year 2008 – 2009 a total of 192 students applied for ACCESS arrangements to sit the Junior Lyceum exams. To ensure that each student was given precisely what was required during exams it was necessary to assess all students who had not had any recent assessment for dyslexia or to evaluate any recently written reports. It was also necessary to discuss arrangements with colleagues at the School Psychological Service particularly when children displayed various difficulties.
- *MATSEC assessments:* A total of 46 students, mostly students who had been attached to the SpLD Service over the last years, were assessed or re-assessed for the purposes of MATSEC ACCESS arrangements – the required report was written and details were forwarded to parents and to the MATSEC Board.
- *Students' assessments:* A total of 356 students were assessed during the year 2009.
- *Organisation of seminars:* In September 2009 the SpLD Service invited Rosie Woods, former Director of the Helen Arkell Centre, to talk about the *No to Failure* Project. Ms Woods spoke about the Rose Report and the various structured projects carried out which clearly indicate that multisensory teaching can very effectively develop the literacy skills of dyslexic students.
- *Standardisation of spelling test:* The SpLD team contributed to the collection of data for the purposes of the National spelling tests in both English and Maltese. This involved visiting some 40 schools and administering the spelling tests to children aged between 6 and 16. It is anticipated that the test will be completed and available for administration as from the next academic year.
- *Informal Sessions:* The student with dyslexia requires understanding and appropriate management. For this reason a number of schools contacted the SpLD Service and invited team members to give teachers

insights as to how to handle the SpLD students and how to contribute towards dyslexia-friendly environments. In October – December the SpLD staff also worked on transition issues – visiting the students who have moved from Primary to Secondary school. Discussions with teachers and members of the SMT were carried out and students were given a booklet to enable them to recall the essential details as to how to cope better at Secondary School level.

Literacy Support – Core Competences

The Literacy Support Teachers – Core Competences started to operate as a team as of September 2009. Their role is to ensure the implementation of the National Policy and Strategy for the Attainment of Core Competences in Primary Education. Their immediate task was to ensure that class teachers drew up the checklists for children who are having difficulties in literacy with regard to both Maltese and English.

The following tables show the Expected Number of Checklists and the Actual Number of Checklists for children who are having problems with Maltese and English literacy in Year 2 and Year 3.

Maltese						
College	Year Two			Year Three		
	Number of Classes	Expected No of Checklists	Actual No of Checklists	Number of Classes	Expected No of Checklists	Actual No of Checklists
St Margaret	12	71	71	13	55	51
St Clare	8	41	21	9	43	19
St Ignatius	13	60	37	12	45	32
St Nicolas	8	39	nil	6	42	1
St Theresa	8	41	23	9	35	26
St Benedict	15	70	17	15	70	5
St Thomas More	15	80	53	14	62	40
St George Preca	15	57	10	14	44	7
Gozo	7	29	11	7	23	14
Total	101	488	243(50%)	99	419	195(46%)

English						
College	Year Two			Year Three		
	Number of Classes	Expected No of Checklists	Actual No of Checklists	Number of Classes	Expected No of Checklists	Actual No of Checklists
St Margaret	12	71	70	13	54	54
St Clare	8	41	20	9	43	15
St Ignatius	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	Nil
St Nicolas	8	39	nil	8	42	1
St Theresa	5	24	17	5	21	16
St Benedict	15	70	15	15	72	9
St Thomas More	15	80	53	14	62	40
St George Preca	13	51	10	12	36	11
Gozo	7	29	nil	7	23	14
Total	83	405	185(46%)	83	353	160(45%)

Literacy Support – Whole School Approach

During January – July 2009 the Literacy team worked on the following:

- *Book Flood Project* with St Theresa College.
- *Kindergarten Project* with St Theresa College where the aims were the setting up of Literacy Room, the implementation of reading sessions in school, the *Take a book home* initiative and the *Literacy through Music* project. These initiatives were all held with the Kindergarten sections of the college in both St Theresa College and Gozo College. The team members participated in Curriculum Time meetings with the Kindergarten staff of the respective schools.
- Assessment and setting up of the reading schemes present in the different schools the team was working with.

- Organisation of activities for *World Book Day* and coordination of activities held with other bodies, namely the Gozo Dyslexia Support Group.
- Different Professional Development Sessions and In-Service Courses for teachers.
- Sessions for parents where different literacy strategies were explained.
- Literacy programme for Secondary Schools where the team members set up appropriate reading schemes trained and worked with teachers and held in class sessions.
- In-class sessions in different primary schools on different reading strategies.
- Reading and spelling tests piloted in various schools in order to set up reading levels in both English and Maltese.
- Development of the Literacy Resource Pack.
- Setting up of libraries in collaboration with the local councils.
- Management of the National Curriculum Centre Literacy Library and the Gozo Literacy Centre.

As of September 2009, the team expanded and now consists of eight members called the Literacy Support Teachers Whole School Approach. They now form part of the literacy support services available to State Schools. The team has worked on the areas indicated below.

- Orientation visits in Colleges and schools they have been assigned to.
- Held meeting with College Principals and Heads of School.
- Held meeting with Heads of School regarding the school's literacy action plan.
- Carried out school visits on an evaluation of the school class libraries, reading schemes and adjusting of levelled readers for the different grades.
- Held meetings with teachers during curriculum development time re reading schemes and the development of a balanced literacy programme.
- Held meetings and discussions with teachers regarding levelled readers, different reading approaches, phonological awareness and the core competencies checklists.
- Held paired reading sessions with parents and their children at Żejtun Primary A.
- Held parental meetings regarding Maltese phonological awareness at the Cottonera College.
- Held shared reading sessions at St Clare's College, Gharghur Primary and Hamrun SS Primary.
- Held guided Reading sessions at Hamrun SS Primary.
- Led various Professional Development Sessions at different schools.
- Held meetings with complementary teachers regarding different literacy acquisition strategies.
- Helped in the screening of the different reading levels in Maltese in early years.
- Attended a three-day training seminar by Ann Derbyshire on different reading strategies.
- Attended a one-day training seminar by Stephen Graham re guided reading.
- Continued supporting the Gozo Dyslexia Support Group.
- Helped compile the *Whole School Approach Booklet of Guidelines for Schools*.
- Coordinated book week activities in different schools.
- Worked on the compilation of reading cards for Maltese Early years.
- Worked on the Core Competences checklist with the different schools to supplement the work being done by the Core Competences Support Staff.
- Held meetings with local councils, namely Senglea and Kalkara re school literacy provision.

The Malta Writing Programme (MWP)

From September 2009, the MWP moved from the Foundation for Educational Services to the DQSE and now forms part of the literacy support services available to State Schools. Its offices are at the National Curriculum Centre, Hamrun, which houses both the MWP Library and the documentation of the programme. Since September the MWP worked with different schools in two ways:

- *Project Schools*: At present there are two project schools, both embarked on the project last year and are currently in their second year of the three-year cycle. In the project schools, the MWP works with a target year group through in class demos, team teaching and meetings with the teachers to reflect, discuss and plan provision. Teachers in other year groups meet with the MWP personnel to discuss issues regarding writing. Clinics for parents were also held where parents discussed with MWP personnel issues regarding

their child's progress with regard to writing. The schools involved were St Ignatius Luqa Primary, and Mater Boni Consilii School Paola. Initial meetings with the SMT and teachers of year 4 and year 5 respectively were held. Furthermore about 15 demo sessions were held with two Year 5 classes (15 children in each class, and 2 class teachers and 1 Learning Support Assistant (LSA)) at Luqa Primary School, while at Mater Boni Consilii School Paola, 6 demo sessions were held with one Year 4 class (28 children, 1 teacher and 1 LSA were present for each session).

- *Support Schools*: MWP personnel held meetings and sessions in the schools receiving this provision though on a less frequent basis than the project schools. Various meetings were held with a number of schools and Colleges to support the programme.

EARLY YEARS

The work being done in this area is essentially the following:

- professional support in Kindergarten classes in all Colleges concerning confirmation visits, routine visits and follow-up visits – observing lessons and strategies for development;
- coordinating the MCAST 70-hour and 140-hour course for Kindergarten Assistants;
- organisation and presentation of an In-service Course entitled: *Starting Right: Understanding Differentiation for Inclusive Practice*;
- sitting on various Interviewing Boards;
- attendance at seminars and conferences for self Professional Development;
- holding of School-based Professional Development Session for Kindergarten Assistants. re *Differentiation in the Kindergarten*;
- meeting for Heads of School at the Gozo College.

Inclusive Education

Listed below are activities that the Education Officer responsible for this area contributed to or was responsible for:

- professional support in primary classes with a focus on Years 5 and 6 – observing lessons, giving feedback, identifying teacher's strengths and areas for improvement in classroom practice, discussing teaching points and strategies, setting targets for improvement of specific areas related to teaching and learning in the context of inclusive education;
- professional support to school senior management in relation to inclusive and special education policy and practice;
- delivery of sessions and mentoring in Basic Skills Training Course for Secondary School teachers;
- curriculum management in Special Schools in collaboration with the Director CMELD and Mr Keith Humphreys and the Directorate for Educational Services;
- production of video on Differentiated Learning and Teaching in collaboration with the Let Me Learn Team and Channel 22;
- coordination and part delivery of national in-service training for Primary Teachers in Years 5, 6 and 7 focusing on Effective Classroom Practices (Feb-June and September);
- member of the working group on Social and Emotional Literacy in the Primary. This group has the task to develop the Core Competences in social and emotional literacy for the Primary years and then developing consequent action plans for early support, identification, integration and intervention;
- involvement in curriculum management and meetings at the Directorate for Educational Services;
- helping stakeholders, including Education Officers, to develop new mindsets built on the principles of fulfilling each student's entitlement to a quality education in secondary schools;
- participation in the Project on Teacher Education for Inclusion - European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education;
- holding tutorials for Inclusive Coordinators;
- involvement in Strategic Professional Development Planning for students with Individual Educational Needs under the direction of Mr Keith Humphreys;

- animating Professional Development Sessions at school level;
- attendance and participation to various Conferences, Seminars and Workshops.

Social Studies Primary

The Education Officer for Social Studies worked on the following tasks:

- observing lessons in primary schools, identifying primary teachers' strengths and areas for improvement in classroom practice;
- offering professional support in primary classes (re confirmation visits and routine visits and follow-up visits), providing feedback, discussing teaching points and strategies; setting targets for improvement of specific areas related to teaching and learning;
- forming part of the Social Studies Review Committee set up by the Director General and Permanent Secretary to evaluate Social Studies in the Primary Schools;
- fulfilling the duties of Inspector for European Kindergarten and Primary schools;
- introducing a number of fieldwork notes and directives for Primary Schools relevant to the teaching of Social Studies – the first set of work directives, suitable for year 5 were uploaded in November 2009 and can be viewed at <http://schoolnet.gov.mt/socialstudies/Year5/Fieldwork-Mdina-Yr5.pdf>;
- working on a project with the Principal of Maria Regina College in connection with the creation of a number of power point presentations for Year 5 Social Studies teaching;
- liaising with Primary Heads of Department on a number of projects, main ones being:
 - formulation of fieldwork directives beginning with Year 5;
 - finalising the Year 4 resources on the Social Studies website at <http://schoolnet.gov.mt/socialstudies>;
 - vetting the Year 5 Social Studies power point project;
- updating and improving the social studies website at <http://schoolnet.gov.mt/socialstudies> for the benefit of Primary School teachers, students and parents. The focus during 2009 was on Year 4 material where a number of teaching resources created by Year 4 teachers themselves have been uploaded;
- attending the Aachen Conference (October 2009) entitled *European Inspectorates, Are We Looking the Right Way?*
- being responsible for the setting, marking and writing of reports in connection with the Social Studies Junior Lyceum Examination Paper 2009;
- setting and monitoring the Social Studies National Annual Examination Papers for Years 4, 5 and 6;
- researching various pedagogical aspects found in current primary schools' practices, by means of oral feedback and written procedures.

Social Studies Secondary

The Education Officer for Social Studies carried out the following tasks:

- regular routine visits to all Secondary Schools of the ten State Colleges, whilst providing support for Non-State Schools where required;
- attended the 15th EDC/HRE National Coordinators' Meeting which was held in Prague in November;
- setting up of the Social Studies Teachers' Association, the objective of which is not only to promote the subject in all schools, but also serves as a platform where teachers can meet informally to exchange knowledge and experiences;
- coordinated, in collaboration with *Aġenzija Sedqa*, the compilation of a new online resource pack for Social Studies teachers and students;
- issued official guidelines for teachers regarding the set up of the Social Studies final examination papers.
- in collaboration with the Courts of Justice and His Honour the Chief Justice, coordinated the Courts of Justice Programme, where Form 4 students can visit the Courts of Law and learn more about the judiciary system in Malta;
- attended the conference *Active Citizenship in Europe* which was held in Gothenburg (Sweden) in September;
- worked with Education Officers (PSD and Media) on a project in collaboration with *Aġenzija Sedqa*;

- formed part of the Social Studies Review Committee set up by the Director General and Permanent Secretary to evaluate Social Studies in the Primary Schools.

Maltese Primary

Main initiatives:

- Participation in the *National Council of Maltese Language* (2009-2012), and chairing the Technical Committee for Education within the Council.
- Organised a national seminar, *Bilingualism in Malta's Education*, with the National Council of Maltese Language and the Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education.
- Trained primary teachers of Years 1, 2 and 3 regarding Core Competences in the Primary level and published resources on the CMeLD website.
- Held professional development sessions for teachers in Primary Schools regarding the adjournment of the new orthographic regulations in collaboration with the University of Malta and the National Council of Maltese Language.
- Set up a Maltese language website for the Primary level, with resources for teachers of Maltese in the Primary.
- Contributed through Maltese television and radio programmes, to the promotion of the Maltese language in education.
- Organised *Jum Dun Karm*, with *Kumitat Festi Nazzjonali* which was attended by the Mayor of Floriana and the Director CMeLD.
- Participated in the committee which set the learning outcomes of the Maltese language.
- Visited classrooms in the primary level and gave professional support to teachers.
- Drafted a syllabus of Maltese Language (L4) for the Secondary level for the European Schools.
- Contributed to translations of official Education documents.
- Coordinated the setting up of Examinations and Marking Schemes, moderating and reporting (Maltese Junior Lyceum).
- Sat on various interviewing boards for the selection of teachers of Maltese language for the Secondary level; Heads of Department of the Maltese language in the Church Sector; Heads of Department of the Maltese language in the State Sector; Teacher Librarians and Teachers to implement the Writing Programme.
- Planned strategies, resources for in-service course on Oracy and for Kindergarten Assistants.

Maltese Secondary

The Education Officer responsible for this area was involved in the following initiatives:

- preparing a number of examination papers for Junior Lyceums, General Secondary and Primary Schools at the mainstream and foundation levels;
- organising an in-service course for teachers of Maltese at the Secondary level;
- taking part in a number of interviewing boards for the recruitment of personnel for various posts in the Education Directorates as well as Church Schools;
- choosing selected readers to be used at Form I and Form II level of Junior Lyceums and Secondary Schools;
- proof-reading, editing and updating resource material in book-form, recently published by the CMeLD.
- visiting schools for support, inspectorial and mentoring purposes.

English and Mathematics Primary

The highlights of the work carried out are the following:

- coordinating and setting of National Examinations and Marking Schemes, moderating and reporting – English (JL and Resit);
- setting of Annual Examinations and Marking Schemes – English (Years 4, 5 and 6);
- setting of Annual Examinations and Marking Schemes – Mathematics (Years 4, 5 and 6);

- professional support in primary classes (re-confirmation visits, routine visits and follow-up visits) – observing lessons; identifying teacher’s strengths and areas for improvement in classroom practice; providing feedback, discussing teaching points and strategies; setting targets for improvement of specific areas related to teaching and learning;
- professional development for school senior management re monitoring and supporting classroom practice in the primary school;
- school-based professional support regarding differentiated teaching;
- College-based professional support regarding the setting of Half Yearly examinations;
- national in-service training for teachers of Years 1, 2 and 3 focussing on the teaching of English at Primary – including strategies for enhancing reading and writing skills; organising teamwork for the sharing of ideas, and publishing material produced on the CMELD website;
- evaluating language practice at class/school/college re the Best Language Practice Award;
- interviewing teachers regarding complementary education;
- planning the Oracy Project for Years 4 to 6/7;
- organising an information session on BritLit for primary teachers. The information session introduced teachers to a project run by the British Council and the BBC aimed at helping teachers use English literature as a language teaching tool;
- feedback on Trends in Mathematics and Science Survey (TIMSS) and Progress in International Reading Literacy Survey (PIRLS);
- working on English Level Descriptors for the National Curriculum Framework .

Mathematics Secondary

During 2009, the Mathematics section carried out the following initiatives:

- introduced a new syllabus at Form 4 Junior Lyceums and general Secondary Schools. This syllabus is now subdivided into four schemes that cater for all levels of student ability, namely, from the high achievers (Scheme A) to those who need mathematics as a Basic Skill (Scheme D);
- set the test paper and formed part of the team in charge of the Basic Skills Assessment at the various Colleges;
- carried out a Basic Skills Training course for those teaching mathematics to students following a Basic Mathematics (Numeracy) Programme;
- organised six ‘hands-on’ activities for gifted and talented Form 4 students from state and non-state secondary schools as well as two similar activities for students in Form 5;
- set examination papers for Junior Lyceums and general Secondary Schools;
- organised in-service courses in July and September for teachers of Form 1 to Form 5 of state and non-state schools about the Trends in Mathematics and Science Survey (TIMSS);
- worked on the level descriptors of both Primary and Secondary levels as part of the National Curriculum Review;
- visited Secondary Schools to support teachers in their good practices;
- visited Primary Schools to become familiar with existing practices in mathematics to be able to train the teachers of Years 1, 2 and 3 in 2010;
- published two issues of the Mathematics magazine *Mathsline*, a publication for the professional development of teachers at both Primary and Secondary Schools;
- carried out structured routine visits by Heads of Department in a number of Secondary State Schools at which there is no Mathematics Head of Department. During 2009 the discussions focused mainly on setting and moderation of examination papers; level descriptors; and basic skills;
- worked on a National Policy and Strategy for the Attainment of Core Competences; this policy targets students in Years 1, 2 and 3 and who are at risk of not acquiring the Core Competences in Literacy, eLiteracy and Mathematics;
- held the 5th Mathematics Olympiad for State and Non-State students in Form 3 and 4 (won by Savio College);
- participated in school-based Staff Professional Development sessions in both State and Non-State schools;

- carried out interviews for the engagement of Supply and Regular Mathematics teachers as well as Heads of Department (Mathematics);
- carried out teacher appraisal and confirmation of appointments.

Science Primary and Secondary

In 2009 the Science Centre embarked on a variety of activities which were mostly concerned with the promotion of science learning and the popularisation of science as a means of increasing the awareness of the effects of scientific knowledge on everyday life.

The four education officers (Primary Science, Physics, Chemistry and Biology) at the Science Centre:

- actively participated on the Committee for the development of a National Science Strategy
- conducted regular visits in state and church schools
- conducted professional teaching training in July and September 2009
- conducted interviews for the recruitment of regular, supply and peripatetic teachers.

Science Primary

- The peripatetic teachers assigned to the Centre were reorganised to offer science lessons to all primary classes on alternate weeks.
- Fieldwork activities where primary students get first-hand experience were increased.
- Teaching resources were introduced and a monthly newsletter was launched.

Science Secondary – Biology, Chemistry and Physics

The three Education Officers responsible for the secondary sector:

- participated actively in the ERDF project (Project 58) for the procurement of equipment in State Schools;
- planned and set annual exam papers together with corresponding marking schemes;
- conducted the ‘Science Education Research Seminar’ at the MCST hall in Bighi where university graduates presented their studies;
- launched the Darwin Now exhibition, an exposition of banners related to Darwin’s life and achievements together with thematic presentations for students;
- organised the *Tara Oceans* seminar with talks by members of the crew related to various investigations about marine life and ecology carried out in the Arctic and the Mediterranean;
- organised various activities related to the Year of Astronomy that included an astronomy night and a number of exhibitions about astronomy;
- organised a visit to CERN in collaboration with MASE with the purpose of getting first-hand experience about particle physics;
- cooperated with the Director CMELD and the directors of the Ekoskola project, the Birdlife project and the HSBC global warming programme.

Art

The following are the tasks and initiatives undertaken by the Art Department:

- organised in-service courses in July for Art Teachers for Secondary State and Non-State Schools;
- organised meetings for primary peripatetic Art Teachers where various art workshops were planned as extra curricular activities to complement the art syllabus;
- carried out visits in both Primary and Secondary Schools;
- acquired a selection of books for the Art Department;
- set the national Annual Examination Papers in collaboration with the Education Officer and the Head of Department;
- introduced a new syllabus for the Form 1 Art Option;

- organised a national event where Secondary Schools presented two ceramic tiles to form part of a collective ceramic mural to celebrate the *Year of Creativity and Innovation*;
- worked on an art handbook for class teachers in the Primary sector;
- organised an exhibition of lithographs made by teachers during the July in-service course;
- represented Malta in meetings held in Brussels of the *Expert Group on developing synergies with Education especially Arts*;
- represented Malta along with other Education Officers at the symposium *Promoting a Creative Generation* at Gothenburg Sweden;
- represented Malta in the Symposium held in Berlin *The Roadmap for Arts Education*, in preparation for a world conference to be held in Seoul in May 2010;
- collaborated with the *National Museum of Fine Arts* to introduce an innovative slant to the national Form 5 Annual Examination paper;
- collaborated with the National Museum of Fine Arts to organise a staff development course for Art Peripatetic Teachers;
- supported initiatives taken by the teachers of Art in various colleges. These were:
 - *Art Links*, an Art exhibition carried out by the Secondary Schools of St Margaret College, St Benedict College and St Thomas More College, which was held at Sta Lucia Girls' Secondary School.
 - *Caravaggio*, an artistic initiative involving all art teachers and students in the Primary and Secondary sectors of Maria Regina College.

Music

The Education Officer for Music carried out the following tasks:

- *Music Workbook for Year 1*: A workbook has been published for all children in Year 1. The workbook features simple music graded exercises to be used during the music lessons by the peripatetic music teachers.
- *In-service Courses and Music Concert in May*: Two in-service courses were organised for peripatetic Music teachers and teachers teaching music (part of the Art/Literature/Music programme) in Secondary Schools. The course was combined with a concert with a live performance for all music teachers and students at both Primary and Secondary Schools. Both courses and concert were conducted by Mro Daniele Del Lungo from Florence Music Conservatoire.
- *Recorder Course*: A recorder course was organised for peripatetic teachers in order for them to be able to teach instruments to years 3, 4 and 5 students in primary classes.
- *Music Pilot Project in Form 1*: Music is being offered as an option subject for the first time at Form 1 level. Students are being offered the chance to learn music professionally during school hours. As part of the project, a trained and professional choir was set-up.
- *A new syllabus for Music Option*: A syllabus for Form 1 students was developed. This was based on the British and Scottish approach to Music teaching in secondary schools and specialised music education.
- *A new syllabus for Primary students*: a new syllabus was developed for students at Primary level. This syllabus incorporates recorder tuition and the learning of some music notation which is fundamental to all students of a young age. Special reference is made on Maltese repertoire as part of singing education.
- *Music Learning Outcomes*: New Music Learning Outcomes were devised as part of the revised Curriculum.
- Visits to teachers, animation of Professional Development Sessions, meetings with Heads of Schools to discuss future projects, interviews of teachers, the compilation of examination papers and reports were also carried out during the year.

Drama

- The Drama Unit presented ten Theatre in Education (TIE) projects. Most of these were presented at the Drama Unit. The TIEs were:
 - *Krex*: for Secondary School students as part of the Valletta Europe Youth Week.. This was held at Freedom Square Valletta. The topic of this TIE was diversity awareness.

- *Face Space*: for Forms 1, 2 and 3, held in January at the Drama Unit in collaboration with the office of the Commissioner for Children. The aim of this TIE was to make students aware of the need to use the Internet safely. 1,659 students attended.
- *Mal-Mejda*: for Forms 4 and 5, held in March at the Drama Unit. This project focused on the abuse on children. The aim was to increase awareness about the experiences and certain abuses experienced by children and how these can be avoided. 1,062 students attended.
- *Paċi Kulaċi*: for Year 4, held during April at the Drama Unit. The aim of this project was to explain to students, through a simple tale, the idea of prejudice which could be based on people's nationality or appearance. 1,581 pupils attended.
- *Macbeth*: for Form 4, held in April and May at the Drama Unit. This programme included acted excerpts from Macbeth Acts 1, 2, and 5. The aim of this TIE was to help students in their studies of this play. It also served as an introduction to the life and work of William Shakespeare. 1047 students attended.
- *4 Drammi*: for Form 4, held at the Drama Unit in May. This programme included acted excerpts from *4 Drammi*, written by Oreste Calleja. This TIE served as an introduction to the work of the Maltese playwright Oreste Calleja. It also helped students to appreciate theatre and Maltese literature. 479 students attended.
- *Hans u Greta*: for Year 1 and 2, held at the Drama Unit in June. This TIE focused on healthy eating habits through the tale of Hansel and Gretel. 569 pupils attended.
- *Aghmillu Karta*: for Forms 1 and 2. This TIE was held at the Drama Unit and Ewropa House, Valletta, in October in collaboration with the Elderly and Community Services Department. This was about how abuse on the elderly can be avoided. This project aimed at helping our students to respect the elderly. A total number of 1,445 students attended.
- *Pietru u l-Alsatian*: for Year 3. This TIE was held at Drama Unit in November and was produced in collaboration with SPCA Malta. This TIE inspired by the tale *Peter and the Wolf*, aimed to show children the importance of love and respect for animals.
- *Meta Nħaraq it-Teatru*: for Year 5, held at the Drama Unit in December in collaboration with the Malta Tourism Authority as part of the *Apprezza* campaign. This TIE was based on a short story by Trevor Zahra recounting the fire at the Malta Royal Opera House, in 1873. This story is seen through the eyes of a twelve year old Maltese girl. A total number of 957 pupils attended.
- In September, the Drama Unit organised an in-service course, *Sounds and Lights for the Theatre*.
- The Drama Unit teachers visited schools throughout the year. During the second and third term of scholastic year 2008/2009 the teachers gave drama lessons, helped teachers use Drama in their teaching, helped in the staging of the Prize Days, as well as other activities related to Drama and Theatre. During the first term of 2009/2010 these visits were reduced due to a reduction in personnel and the involvement of Drama teachers in the national campaigns *Wash your Hands Campaign* and *The President's Piggy Bank Campaign*.
- The Drama Unit was involved in two national campaigns in schools namely:
 - *Wash Your Hands Campaign* organised in conjunction with the Health and Safety Department of the Directorate for Educational Services as part of the national campaign to reduce the risks of swine flu. Two Drama Unit Teachers visited schools where they presented an interactive performance written and devised by them, which involved the participation of students. About 8,000 students were reached.
 - *The President's Piggy Bank Campaign* for *L-Istrina* 2009 which involved four Drama Unit teachers who wrote the script and produced all props costumes and puppets. The shows were presented in different State, Church and Independent Schools. About 10,000 students were reached.

Personal and Social Development (PSD)

The Education Officers responsible for this subject carried out the tasks indicated below.

- Organised and facilitated meetings, seminars and the compulsory In-Service Course with Primary and Secondary PSD teachers and Heads of Department.
- Had meetings with various agencies and entities namely Sedqa, the Health Education Committee, Lombard Bank, Detox Centre, Kummissjoni Nazzjonali Persuni b'Dizabilità, Employment and Training

Corporation, Education 22, the European Commission, the Health Promotion Division, Consumer Affairs Division and the Health Association.

- Carried out training for all Secondary PSD teachers on the theme of *Media Education in the PSD syllabus* in collaboration with the Education Officer Media.
- Collaborated with *Lombard Bank* for the inclusion of an anti-smoking campaign in Secondary Schools and in the student production of educational DVDs for a national educational competition on the theme of smoking abuse.
- Collaborated with Education Officers Religion and the Malta Unborn Child Movement Society and discussed the availability of education material on the matter.
- Collaborated with Education Officers Religion to distribute educational material provided by the *Żgħażaġh Haddiema Nsara* to all PSD and Religion teachers and to inform them of the availability of Week-End Activities which schools can apply for.
- Collaborated with Education Officer Social Studies on the project related to the Liforce/Sedqa activity.
- Collaborated with various Education Officers from the Humanities section to plan and organise different activities in relation to the Poverty and Social Exclusion year in conjunction with Caritas.
- Organised monthly support meetings for new PSD teachers within the Secondary Sector.
- Organised an induction course for new PSD teachers in the Primary Sector.
- Started monthly support meetings for new PSD teachers in the Primary Sector.
- School visits were carried out in both Primary and Secondary Schools, encompassing all ten Colleges. Visits included lesson observations and subject meetings. Apart from PSD, Thinking Skills teachers and PSD teachers on loan with Sedqa were also given training and support.
- Various meetings were held with the Health Promotion Unit and members from the Directorate for Educational Services to work on various projects within the different schools.
- Worked on Learning Outcomes in connection with the review of the Curriculum Framework.
- Collaborated with the PSD Association in the organisation of a day seminar entitled *Entertainment or Addiction? Where do youths cross the line?*
- Collaborated with the Kummissjoni Nazzjonali Persuni b'Diżabilità and Jesuit Refugee Service in the organisation of a half-day seminar entitled *Access for all; Success for all*. The theme of the seminar was of the importance of inclusion of people of different races and abilities. Both Primary and Secondary teachers attended.
- Set up a focus group on the development of resources.
- Attended and evaluated the day seminars organised by the PSD Primary teachers in Gozo.
- Worked on educational material being prepared for PSD teachers.
- Conducted Staff Development Sessions and gave various talks on the subject.

Religion

The Education Officers for Religion carried out the work indicated below.

- Held meetings with the Archbishop's delegate for Catechesis to integrate the State and the Church Sector in one direction in the teaching of Religion.
- Participated in meetings with the Officer in charge of the Office of Religious Education within the Maltese Episcopal Conference to plan the ongoing formation of teachers in the Secondary Sector and in-service courses.
- Took part in meetings with the Kummissjoni Djoċesana Żgħażaġh to gather information about the DVDs available for teachers.
- Held meeting with various stakeholders including Heads of School.
- Carried out regular routine visits in Primary and Secondary Schools.
- Collaborated with Education Officers PSD re. Malta Unborn Child Movement Society and discussed the availability of education material on the matter.
- Collaborated with Education Officers PSD to distribute educational material provided by the *Żgħażaġh Haddiema Nsara* to all PSD and Religion teachers and to inform them of the availability of Week-End Activities which schools can apply for.
- Prepared resources for teachers.

- Set examination papers for all levels.

Arabic

The Education Officer responsible for this area carried out the following initiatives during the year under review:

- preparation of Handouts Part II in Arabic for teachers of Arabic together with CDs as supplementary notes in the form of a Booklet to assist them in their teaching of the new SEC Syllabus of 2010 for the culture section of the Examination;
- selecting and procuring new Arabic textbooks;
- organisation of the adult Arabic evening classes in collaboration with the Department of Further Studies and Adult Education;
- setting up of a new and a completely revised edition of the Arabic Language Syllabus which was implemented in September 2009. The new syllabus is available on the CMELD website;
- organisation and animation of an in-service course for the teachers of Arabic on the new Arabic Language Syllabus and the methodology of the new textbooks;
- participation in the preparatory meetings of the 26th Maltese-Libyan Joint Commission during the month of November at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Presentation of proposals for further assistance from the Libyan counterpart to the Arabic Language Centre;
- participation in the meetings and contribution to the writing of the learning outcomes for foreign languages as part of the work involved in the National Curriculum Framework;
- routine work such as preparation of examination papers, school visits and administration of the Arabic Maltese Centre.

English

During the year under review the work of the English section focused on the tasks indicated below.

- *Launching of Annual Foundation Level examination papers.* For the first time, the English Section was requested to produce a set of Annual Examination Papers and Mark Schemes aimed at Foundation Level students. Apart from the actual writing of the five papers, this involved the consultation of various stakeholders as well as research in the field. Twelve other Annual Examination Papers, with related Mark Schemes, were produced for other sectors.
- *Programme for International Students Assessment (PISA) Project.* The three Education Officers for English were engaged in evaluating and providing feedback on a number of test tasks designed for the PISA project. The Education Officers carried out coding duties for the same project. The assignment consisted of marking scripts of students who took part in the preliminary part of this project. The samples were taken from State, Church and Independent Schools.
- *European Indicator of Language Competence (EILC).* The three Education Officers for English were assigned the marking of scripts of students that took part in the Routing pre-test of SurveyLang, in connection with the European Indicator of Language Competence (EILC) project. The students were sampled from State, Church and Independent Schools. Before the actual pre-test, the officers visited the selected schools and explained the procedures to the school administration and teachers concerned.
- *Identifying, celebrating and disseminating good language practice.* This came about through membership of a Committee entrusted with the task of rewarding good practice in a number of Primary and Secondary Schools in the State and Non-State Sectors participating in the Best Language Practice of the Year Award 2009.
- *In-Service Training on new Course Book.* An in-service course on the new Matrix course book was held for Form 1 Junior Lyceum teachers of English. A specialist trainer from Oxford University Press was brought over to Malta for this purpose. Other in-service courses were held by the three Education Officers in July and September 2009. Teachers of English in State, Church and Independent Schools attended these courses that dealt with various topics related to English Language teaching.

- Collecting Spoken Production and Spoken Interaction exemplars from Secondary Schools with the view of introducing an oral assessment scheme based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.
- *BritLit Project*: The English Section collaborated with the British Council (Malta) in the organisation of a seminar about the BritLit project. This project involves an approach to the teaching of English through literary texts. A specialist trainer was engaged to deliver the seminar to representative teachers from all schools in Malta and Gozo.
- *Malta Qualifications Council evaluations*: The Malta Qualifications Council (MQC) requested the service of English Education Officers for the evaluation of teaching programmes on its behalf. This task involved research into the already-established MQC levels and discussions with stakeholders, apart from the actual evaluation.
- *Interviewing Boards*: The Education Officers were nominated to sit on various interviewing boards, both as chairpersons and members. These Boards included those for Heads of Department, Regular Teachers and Supply Teachers.
- *New Curriculum Framework*: One of the Education Officers was involved in the preparation process of Learning Outcomes for the New Curriculum Framework.
- Other routine tasks performed by the Education Officers of English were:
 - the moderation of annual examination papers conducted in 20 schools;
 - confirmation of teachers' appointments;
 - school visits;
 - attendance at and active participation in Departmental and Division meetings and seminars;
 - monitoring of Junior Lyceum Entrance Examination;
 - regular meetings with Heads of Department at the English Language Resource Centre.

Italian

The highlights of the Curriculum Projects of the Department of Italian within the CMeLD for 2009 included the activities indicated below:

- Further review was carried out on the syllabus for Italian with special attention to the teaching of culture through the adoption of the new text in Forms 3 and 4.
- September 2009 saw the introduction in Form 3 and 4 in State Secondary Schools and Junior Lyceum classes of the new textbook for the teaching of Italian culture: *Civiltà punto it*.
- Culture material continued to see its incorporation in the new syllabus and use in State Schools.
- Two editions of *Lo Stivale* which is distributed throughout all schools (State, Church and Independent) in Malta and Gozo were published.
- The Italian Language Awareness project in Primary Schools saw a considerable expansion. Two additional teachers were recruited in the project with the number of teachers involved being eight. Nine Colleges are involved and have their Year 5 classes in Primary Schools doing Italian Language Awareness lessons. The new teachers were given sets of material for the teaching of Italian language and culture at Primary level. This material was freely obtained from an Italian publishing house.
- Further contacts with the Italian Embassy were made and this gave birth to another competition in which 23 Secondary Schools participated. The theme for the project chosen was *L'Italiano fra Arte, Scienza e Tecnologia*. All schools participated through exhibitions, research, plays, role-plays and ICT presentations. An adjudicating panel, headed by His Excellency the Italian Ambassador to Malta, visited each school and judged the practice. In October, €2000 (kindly sponsored by MiddleSea Valletta Life) were distributed among the 8 winning schools; the money will now go towards improving facilities and resources for the teaching of Italian in the respective schools.
- Thanks to the intervention of His Excellency, the Italian Ambassador, the Rector of the Università per Stranieri in Siena kindly offered one-month scholarships to eight teachers from the winning schools.
- A Departmental circular issued in December launched the competition for 2010, entitled *L'Italiano degli altri: l'Italiano a Malta*.
- Contacts and information meetings were made between the Education Officer and the new Director of the Italian Cultural Institute in Valletta, Dott. Bruno Busetti.

- Two teachers won the 10-day scholarship for the Università per Stranieri in Perugia. These two scholarships are kindly offered by the University every year;
- Further in-service training was held. It was conducted by the author of Rete! series and teachers had the opportunity to discuss with him the methodology utilised in the creation of web quests with relation to the use of the text.
- The Italian section participated in the SurveyLang project. Students in Form 5 from 13 Secondary State and Non-State Schools were involved. This project shall continue in 2010 and 2011. The European Survey on Language Competences (a first of its kind) which is an EU initiative, is intended to be a key tool for European governments to use for developing policies on multilingualism and language learning;
- Interviews were held for the posts of Heads of Department in the Italian section;
- Various meetings were held with teachers of Italian in Church Schools as a result of the cooperation between the Italian section and the newly appointed Head of Department for Italian for Church Schools.

French

The work done in the year under review comprised the activities indicated below.

- *Francofête 2009* - 74 schools and 956 students were involved and participated in this year's Francofête which included prize-giving for an online questionnaire, a Christmas Card competition and a competition involving SMS language (CKWA);
- Visits by Primary School children to Centre Franco-Maltais - Pupils from around 30 schools visited the Centre where they participated in:
 - language games aimed at language awareness;
 - simple cookery, with the recipe being done in French;
 - presentations with discussion about cultural and geographic phenomena which are not typical to Malta (eg winter sports, snow, Christmas celebrations in France).
- *Inset 2009 – July* - The Inset organised this year for teachers of French dealt mainly with the status of pupils' mistakes in the teaching of a foreign language.
- *Clustering Project* - For the tenth consecutive year, the Centre housed meetings between two clusters of teachers from Junior Lyceum and Secondary Schools respectively in order to produce quality Half-Yearly examination papers. Groups were constituted as follows:
 - 11 Junior Lyceum and Private/Church Schools;
 - 15 Secondary Schools
- Meetings about specific issues:
 - briefing for teachers concerning participation in competitions;
 - briefing for teachers concerning participation in a blog hosted by Centre Franco-Maltais;
 - briefing/discussion for teachers in Secondary Schools re adjustment of Syllabus for Form 4;
 - meeting requested by Mary Glasgow Publications re recent developments.
- *Association of Teachers of French in Malta (APFM)* - The Centre is hosting the Association: an office is provided as well as storage and meeting spaces.

German

An Education Officer for German was appointed towards the end of the year. When serving as Head of Department she carried out the following initiatives:

- Held meetings with teachers of German and obtained feedback regarding the new books and their phasing-in.
- Introduced the new books in all forms for scholastic year 2009-2010.
- Ordered and distributed Interactive DVDs to supplement eLearning and Differentiation.
- Liaised with Goethe Institute Rome, the German Embassy and teachers on queries concerning the German Resource Centre.
- Organised and conducted an in-service Course for teachers: *e-Learning, Multimedia-Führerschein, Landeskunde – Anniversary of Berlin Wall*.
- Chaired interviews for recruitment of new teachers of German.

- Supported teachers and supply teachers in State, Church and Independent Schools.
- Supplied specimen papers for new SEC 2010.
- Mentored new teachers and held regular Departmental meetings.
- Coordinated and set Half Yearly and Annual Examination Papers.
- Collated information on school statistics and teachers' timetables.

Physical Education and Sport

The Education Officer carried out the activities described below.

- Held meetings with various Principals and Heads of School to promote Physical Education and Sport within the respective schools and Colleges.
- Carried out school visits to give support and to maintain and improve the standards in Physical Education.
- Held meetings for Peripatetic and Secondary School teachers. Secondary teachers were divided into 2 groups. Meetings were held alternately. These were held to create a learning community and for the rethinking and reformulation of a syllabus that could cater from Year 1 to Form 5. Teachers had also many practical workshops on particular physical education areas. In these meetings, pedagogy, content and new ideas were discussed and evaluated.
- Delivered professional development sessions in five Primary Schools – Fgura Primary B, Safi Primary, Sannat Primary, Gharghur Primary, Floriana Primary.
- Prepared six Examination Papers, two each for Form 3, Form 4 and Form 5, one for Junior Lyceum students and the other for Secondary students.
- Celebrated the Year of Creativity and Innovation with a well-attended sports day in Marsa Sports Ground where students were exposed to 14 different and relatively new sports like Tchoukball, Ultimate, La Crosse and Climbing Wall.
- Organised a seminar in collaboration with the University of Malta to expose teachers to new pedagogies and teaching methodologies. The seminar tackled both the theory and practice. This seminar was held on two days, on the first day it catered for Peripatetic teachers and on the second day it focused on Secondary School teachers.
- Organised an in-service course which focused on critical pedagogies in Physical Education and Sport and empowered participating teachers to improve the teaching-learning process;
- Sat on interviewing boards as chairperson or as a member for the posts of Regular Teachers PE, Supply Teachers PE, Peripatetic PE and Heads of Department PE.
- Launched a workbook prepared by PE teachers which is currently being used by all students taking PE Option.
- Encouraged, helped and promoted various initiatives held at School and College level to promote Physical Education and Sports. Many field/sports days were organised and thousands of students participated in these events.
- Carried out teacher appraisal and confirmation reports;
- Introduced a new syllabus which was worked out by the teachers themselves and is currently being piloted.
- Launched *Brain Gym* for all Years 1-3 Primary students.

Media Education

The Media Education Officer carried out the tasks indicated below.

- Compiled a questionnaire with Heads of Schools re: *The use of Media in Schools*.
- Held sessions for Secondary School Personal and Social Development (PSD) teachers from the ten Colleges in collaboration with the PSD Education Officers re: *Media Units within the Secondary School PSD Syllabus*.
- Attended the *Write and Be Published* workshop organised by the British Cultural Association for 6th Form students.
- Participated in the launching of the Lombard Bank sponsored DVD competition in the campaign against smoking.

- participated in a school social activity involving different uses of Media at the St Nicholas Girls' Secondary School;
- Led a film workshop with St Ignatius College Girls' Junior Lyceum Forms 3, 4 and 5 students whose option subjects included European Studies, PSD and History..
- In collaboration with *Malta Cine Circle* launched *The Short Film Competition 2010* for Secondary Schools.
- Led a Curriculum slot Development Session at St Benedict College Safi Primary;
- Held an English Language Departmental Meeting at St Clare College Girls' Junior Lyceum Pembroke re: *Media and Literature*.
- Attended a short seminar re: *Film Production in Malta* held by the Media Desk of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport at Ewropa House.
- Conducted a Professional Development Session at Maria Regina College Gharghur Primary re: *Media Awareness for Teachers*.

History

The highlights of the work carried out in 2009 are indicated below.

- Introduced a new History textbook for Form 5 (General) History students entitled *Storja ta' Malta fi sfond Ewro-Mediterranju*.
- Introduced a new History textbook for Form 3 (General) History students entitled *Storja ta' Malta 1566-1800*.
- Introduced a new History textbook for Forms 3-5 (Option) History students entitled *From the coming of the Knights to EU membership*.
- The organisation of two in-service courses for teachers in July and September entitled *History Teaching – The Way Forward*. There were 56 participants in the two courses.
- Participation in a Symposium entitled *The Image of the Other in post-conflict Situations* held in Athens.
- The upgrading and restructuring of the History webpage, which can be viewed on <http://schoolnet.gov.mt/history/>.
- Carrying out routine tasks including the preparation of examination papers, moderation, participating in interviewing boards, meetings with Heads of Department, carrying out of routine school visits, confirmation of appointment of teachers, monitoring Junior Lyceum Examinations, meetings and seminars organised by the Directorate.

Democracy and Values Education

Projects were organised in collaboration with the:

- British Council – INDIE (Inclusion and Diversity in Education);
- Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) Malta – the School Outreach Project entitled *Ilkoll Indaqs*;
- European Commission Representation and European Parliament Office Malta – Europe Close to You Fair;
- KOPIN – Global Action Schools;
- INIZJAMED – Conectando Mundos;
- SKOP – Stand Up Take Action Campaign;
- SOS Malta – Water for Life – Malta;
- UNESCO Club (Malta) – Letter Writing Competition;
- Dogs Trust – Animal Awareness Workshops.

Lesson plans, curriculum and interdisciplinary resources were provided to schools to celebrate the commemoration of the following:

- Holocaust Memorial Day focusing on the theme *Stand up to Hatred*;
- 20th Anniversary of the Convention of the Rights of the Child;
- Human Rights Day focusing on the theme *Embrace Diversity – End Discrimination*.

Design and Technology

The Education Officer for this subject was appointed towards the end of the year. The work below was carried out by the Education Officer before he was appointed to his post and by his colleague who likewise was a Head of Department.

- Setting of the Design and Technology annual examination papers.
- Participating in the Design and Technology Reviewing Board set up by the DQSE to evaluate the effectiveness of the way the subject is being delivered.
- Supported teachers in the Malta and Gozo Colleges.
- Organised and delivered orientation courses for Primary Schools during visits to the Design and Technology Learning Centre (DTLC) in Naxxar.
- Carried out introductory sessions on Design and Technology to parents and pupils in various Colleges;
- Held interviews for the recruitment of Design and Technology and Graphical Communication teachers.
- Organised courses for teachers at the DTLC in different areas – Textiles, Resistant Materials, Electronics.
- Participated in the EMBED 2010: Best Use of ICT Awards;
- Assisted architecture and engineering university students in their final model project using CNC machines.
- Carried out on site laboratory inspections and attended project meetings.
- Coordinated works (including the drafting of layouts, electrical installation, gas, safety, furnishing etc.) at the following schools:
 - St Benedict College, Girls' Junior Lyceum Sta Lucia – 1 Food Laboratory(Lab) and 1 Textiles Lab finished and completed with equipment; in process are the CNC Lab and Machine Shop;
 - St Gorg Preca College, Boys' Junior Lyceum Hamrun – 2 Resistant Materials (RM) Labs, Machine Shop, Textiles Lab and Food Lab complete with equipment; in process CNC Lab;
 - De La Salle College – in process are 1 RM Lab, 1 Machine Shop, 1 Food Lab and 1 CNC Lab;
 - St Elias College – consultation, Design and Technology Labs to be introduced;
 - St Dorothy's College – consultation and site inspection on gas system;
 - St Michael's College – consultation for the implementation and coordination of Design and Technology workshops (still in progress);
 - Gozo College, Boys' Secondary Rabat – consultation of Design and Technology workshops with FTS;
 - Maria Regina College, Boys' Secondary Mosta – new College site – consultations with FTS regarding Design and Technology labs.
- Participated in several meetings with FTS regarding Design and Technology labs for Colleges;
- Set criteria for the adjudication of various tenders e.g. Food Lab equipment, CNC Machines and hand tools.
- Carried out research on CNC Machines software.
- Carried out surveys on CNC Labs and equipments.
- Coordinated the sharing and supply of equipment among schools.
- Organised a meeting introducing CNC Labs to College Principals and Heads of School
- Participated in ERDF meetings concerning CNC machines.

Geography

The following is a list of projects and initiatives undertaken by the three geography Heads of Department.

- After a period of consultation with Geography teachers, the former Geography syllabi (Form 1 – 5 general) were given a thorough update. The layout and structure of these syllabi now reflect those of the option classes that were finalised in 2008. Both Junior Lyceum and Secondary School syllabi were updated and the following new components were added;
 - a detailed rationale,
 - all content material was divided into six strands namely *Map Reading and Interpretation; Weather and Climate; Landforms and Processes; Socio-Economic Human Systems; Environmental Concerns and Location and Places*,
 - each strand is carried forward through the five year course,
 - for each topic and sub-topic learning outcomes are emphasised.

- A new textbook for map reading was introduced for option students since the previous one was out of print.
- In-Service Courses were organised by the Geography Department both in July and September. These courses were compulsory and targeted geography teachers who were unable to attend the voluntary courses organised after school hours during the previous year. The emphasis during these courses was placed on the use of Geographical Information System (GIS) as indicated in the rationale of the new syllabus. The course provided a range of information sources to enhance geographical understanding and introduce GIS as another tool in the teaching of the subject.
- The Heads of Department were fully engaged with the setting of 16 annual examination papers with detailed marking schemes and specification grids.
- Regular school visits were carried out throughout the year and the necessary support provided. A moderation exercise of annual examination papers was also carried out both in February and July.
- The Heads of Department were called to sit on the interviewing board for the post of regular teachers for geography in the capacity of members and chairpersons. They were also nominated and served on the MATSEC syllabus panels to contribute in updating the SEC syllabus.
- Global Education Week was organised in collaboration with the North South Centre. This involved follow-up visits to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and students had the opportunity to speak in front of an audience about the initiatives carried out at their schools. Other events were carried out at the National Curriculum Centre where the students presented work carried out at school level. In this way students managed to gain ownership about current global issues. There was also participation in other projects and exhibitions being run by local NGOs such as Global Action Schools, Connectando Mundos, Young Reporters, Water for Life and SOS Malta.
- GIS day was organised by the Geography Department and ISYS representing ESRI which are the leading Geographic Information Systems developers. This activity involved geography option students from two colleges. Students who participated managed to use GIS skills to reinforce material grasped previously.
- The three Heads of Department of Geography were fully involved in the running of the Geography Teachers' Association (GTA, founded 2000) since they form part of the committee. The GTA currently has a membership of about sixty and provides curricular help on a voluntary basis by organising lectures, fieldwork sessions and excursions. Each year a Geography Teachers' Resource Pack is published by the society.

Home Economics and Textiles Studies

The following is a list of activities undertaken by the Education Officer for Home Economics and Textiles Studies:

- the planning, organisation and delivery of an in-service course for each of the Home Economics and Textiles Studies teachers on *Differentiated Teaching and the versatile use of ICT in class*;
- the introduction of the revised Textiles Studies Syllabus for Forms 1, 2 and 3 students;
- the design of 18 Annual Examination Papers and corresponding Mark Schemes for Home Economics and Textiles Studies;
- the contributory role in the Healthy Eating Lifestyle Plan (HELP) committee to promote healthy eating in schools: one significant aspect includes the direction and support offered to all schools to undertake an internal exercise through the Student Councils; another significant initiative includes the co-working with the Ministry for Resources and Rural Affairs to implement the Fruit and Vegetable Scheme in all Primary Schools (State and Non-State).

Further to this, the following services were provided at the Home Economics Seminar Centre (HESC) in Birkirkara:

- A total of 14,685 individuals participated, with 9,341 individuals being hosted on its premises at Birkirkara. Interventions were mainly targeted towards administrators, teachers, parents, Primary School pupils, Secondary School students, members of social clubs, local councils and senior citizens in Day Care Centres.

- The popular Year 3 programme *A Healthy Breakfast for a Good Start* has been revamped and new hands-on activities were prepared and corresponding attractive resources were devised.
- Parents were invited on the premises along with their children to attend a parallel programme entitled: *Gawdi Sahhitek u Sahhet Uliedek*.
- Throughout this scholastic year, the staff at the HESC has developed and facilitated three innovative seminars for students in Secondary Schools (State, Church or Independent Schools): *Aliens in our Food* - Form 2 students; *Nutrition Alert* - Form 2 students; *Savvy Shopper* - Form 3 students
- The HESC staff was invited to conduct hands-on practical interventions parallel to the nutrition seminars in schools.
- As part of its regular duties, all staff at the HESC delivered talks in different Primary and Secondary, State, Church and Independent Schools. Programmes delivered in Primary Schools targeted all year groups starting from Kinder 2 up to Year 6.
- *Milk Power* was a novel programme which was kicked off at the end of the third term by different piloting sessions. It is one of a chain of programmes, targeting the Primary School pupils that seek to build sound, healthy eating habits in children from an early age. The Milk Power programme encourages healthy beverage habits among children through the promotion of a daily consumption of fresh white milk.
- The staff at the HESC delivered interventions in Secondary Schools promoting health and sustainability among teenagers and adolescents through a number of programmes.
- Seminars were held to cater for specific requests from schools and other educational settings. A special practical programme at Mater-Dei School was carried out by HESC staff where students acquired skills to prepare healthy recipes. The HESC staff also met the requirements of St Benedict College who requested a tailor-made talk for parents. This was held at Mqabba Primary Hall on the occasion of *A Healthy Heart Day* organised by the College.
- Consultations with schools were carried out in relation to the implementation of the *Nutrient Based Guidelines for Food and Drink Providers*.
- Food products analysis was conducted when requested by schools, educational entities and food importers for the distribution of food and drink items in schools.
- Members of staff were involved in organising nutrition interventions for the implementation of School Development Plans and Performance Management Programmes.
- A SWOT analysis of HESC's role in relation to the implementation of the HELP Document was carried out. The process has been important not only for identifying where to apply resources and attention, but it has been crucial to put issues into perspective so that priority areas will be addressed by the competent authorities.
- Programme handouts and worksheets were revised and amended as necessary. New handouts were devised, tried and tested with a sample population.
- Consultations with schools were carried out regarding selection of food items for special events e.g. breakfast clubs in accordance to the Food and Beverage Selection Guidelines.
- Contacts and meetings were made with tuck shop operators regarding the provision of Food and Beverages in Schools.
- Market research and food analysis were conducted at various supermarkets to lay the ground for the setting of the *Nutrient Based Guidelines for Food and Drink Providers*, *Food and Beverage Selection Guidelines* and to keep abreast of new food products to formulate and update a comprehensive list of various food items which can be sold in school tuck shops.
- Certificates of approval for food manufacturers and distributors were issued. Members of staff at HESC reviewed and analysed the nutritional information of foods and beverages to establish if these products are in line with the nutritional parameters established in the HELP document. A certificate of approval was issued if products were found to conform to standards.

Computer Studies

Due to the eventual introduction of the Java programming language as part of the SEC syllabus, the CMELD organised compulsory courses for all teachers of Computer Studies in State and Non-State Schools. Teachers were released from school every Wednesday afternoon to attend these courses at the

eLearning Centre. A total of 87 teachers attended one of the five sessions (four in Malta) that were organised.

A three-day in-service course for Computer Studies teachers was held in July at St Ignatius College Handaq. Topics covered during the inset were the proposed Java framework for the SEC syllabus, the introduction of Lego educational kits, common pitfalls in the SEC exam and guidelines for marking the SEC coursework exercises.

Lego educational kits were distributed in all State Secondary Schools where Computer Studies is being taught. The objective was to enhance the problem solving and programming skills of students. The kits may also be used across other subjects such as Mathematics, Physics and Design and Technology.

A number of tenders regarding the ESF project *Parents and Teachers fusion ICT training programme* were awarded.

ICT

The seven modules of the new version 5 ECDL syllabus were structured over five years for implementation in Junior Lyceums. Secondary Schools retained the Start syllabus (4 modules over 5 years). However, from this scholastic year spreadsheets are being phased out while presentations are being phased in. Such a move was felt necessary to bring ICT closer to the ability of the students in this sector.

The introduction of version 5 syllabus brought with it the need of a new set of learning materials for both the teacher and the student. In previous years these were purchased from third parties abroad and were developed for mature students. With the introduction of version 5 syllabus, it was deemed necessary to commission the development of the learning materials locally, so that the content would be oriented towards the local context and would be more appropriate for our students.

Over the past few years, Form 5 students took the ICT annual exam on an automated on-line system. This was revised, updated and uploaded on all servers in Secondary Schools.

eLearning and the eLearning Centre

Towards the end of 2009 another Education Officer was appointed to work on eLearning. The work carried out in 2009 by the section is indicated below.

- 206 (180 in Malta and 26 in Gozo) professional development sessions were delivered in Primary and Secondary schools. Support teachers were also involved in other training sessions such as: Core competences, course to music peripatetic teachers, various topics to ICT Peripatetic teachers, and the Centre Franco-Maltais regarding web design.
- Suppliers were contacted for temporary access to their portals to evaluate software. A number of different emerging technologies were evaluated: Game consoles, Lego Education Mindstorms, and other hardware.
- A three-day event of hands-on activities exhibition of best ICT practices and an ICT award ceremony: *Embed 2009: Best use of ICT awards* was held.
- Annual Examination Papers for ICT were prepared and the Form 5 ICT questions were programmed for the automated testing system (SSr).
- Teachers working on school websites were supported and graphics were created for a number of websites.
- Portals for Skola, Computer Studies and eLearning were designed. Training for VLE and Engrade was designed.
- The ECDL Testing Engine in Schools was upgraded and testing of the question bank to ensure that it was working properly was carried out. The evaluation of the Version 5 ECDL Testing System took place. School Visits in connection with ECDL were carried out together with an evaluation of an ECDL eLearning platform.
- Courses were carried out. These included evening courses held during the scholastic year and courses held during the summer holidays.

- Input was given during various meetings with MITA re eLearning solution business requirements.
- Work was carried out with respect to ESF project 1.21: *Parents and Teachers Fusion ICT Training Programme*. The main tasks were: issuing of five tenders related to the project; allocation of funds and disbursement schedule; and coordination of courses.
- St Paul's Bay Primary School was given support in connection with Microsoft's Innovative Schools Project.
- school visits for both eLearning and ICT.

Skola Portal

Work was carried out on the Skola Portal. The Skola Portal found at <http://skola.edu.mt> is the main portal that offers a number of services and links suitable for students, teachers and the general public. From this portal, one can read articles about school activities and news and leave feedback in the comments section. Students and teachers use this portal to access their email accounts.

A number of subsections are available, namely, websites about the eLearning Courses (<http://courses.skola.edu.mt/>), ECDL (<http://ecdل.skola.edu.mt/>), eTwinning (<http://etwinning.skola.edu.mt/>) and Special Educational Needs (<http://schoolnet.gov.mt/ictsen>). IT related articles are being uploaded on the blog <http://blogit.skola.edu.mt/>.

Students have blogs (<http://primary.skola.edu.mt/> and <http://year5.skola.edu.mt/>) in which they can post articles, compositions, art work, etc. Teachers can upload resources and lesson plans on the blog <http://elresources.skola.edu.mt/>.

From the Skola Portal, one can find links to the CMELD website, to the various school websites and to a number of educational sites.

eTwinning

During 2009 the eTwinning support service was consolidated. The eTwinning National Support Service, within the Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education, offers support to eTwinners and Educators alike, from registering to the eTwinning Portal to the actual setting up and running of projects.

The National Support Service in Malta has been active since 2005, and its main aims and objectives are:

- to help teachers registering onto the eTwinning Portal (<http://etwinning.net>), in order to join a European community of learners and gain access to all resources available to them upon registering;
- to help teachers in setting up an eTwinning Project, from the partner finding to the actual project outcome;
- to help teachers communicate with other teachers from different countries, and effectively open their classrooms to the world;
- to help teachers publish their projects in order to gain recognition, and set examples of good practice amongst the Education community at large;
- to provide training for teachers and eTwinners in the use of the Portal and its tools, including TwinSpace, in the form of Professional Development Sessions, local Courses, and Workshops abroad;
- to train teachers in the use of other Web 2.0 tools, and online or installed software which are available to them;
- to organise outreach activities, such as Seminars for School Leaders, Heads of Department and Principals, to further disseminate the message and scope of eTwinning;
- to keep eTwinners updated about other European LLP (Life Long Learning Program) initiatives, such as Comenius.

The eTwinning National Support Service also takes part in national initiatives, such as EMBED, which took place last year, and showcased some of eTwinning's finest projects for the scholastic year 2008-2009. The National eTwinning Award Ceremony, during which the best projects for the scholastic year competed to win the first, second and third prizes, also took place during the EMDED week.

eTwinning Portal

The National Maltese eTwinning Portal (<http://etwinning.skola.edu.mt>) is part of Skola Portal, and hence uses the WordPress engine. It is a dynamic website, frequently updated (three times a week) with the latest News, Projects, and Partner Finding Ideas. It is the main means of communication between eTwinners and the National Support Services within the CMELD.

The two main strands that are covered in the eTwinning Portal are Partner Finding Ideas and Software Reviews. Since one of the most important aims of the National Support Service is to ensure that a good number of projects are running during the year, 'Project Adverts', that is, calls for project partners (which have either been sent to the National Support Service via e-mail, or which the NSS finds from the Partner finding Forum) were frequently published in the year under review.

The eTwinning Portal also serves to connect all eTwinners (and educators) together; hence the National Support Service also publishes news items which are of interest to those who visit the Portal. News items include information about eTwinning Courses, current initiatives and Competitions. The eTwinning Portal also publishes news from the Central Support Service in Brussels.

The eTwinning Portal is a showcase for teachers' project work and ideas. Teachers are invited to send their project ideas, materials and digital work (photographs, videos, Power Points and website links) for publication on the website. Some examples of past articles published this year include:

Partner Finding Ideas:

- <http://etwinning.skola.edu.mt/2009/11/a-snapshot-of-europe-a-24-country-etwinning-project/>
- Software Reviews: <http://etwinning.skola.edu.mt/2009/09/collaborative-tool-imagination-cubed/>
- Project Showcase: <http://etwinning.skola.edu.mt/2009/06/schoolovision2009/>
- News: <http://etwinning.skola.edu.mt/2009/12/new-twinspace-guidelines-published/>

RAYMOND J CAMILLERI

Director (Curriculum Management and eLearning Department)

QUALITY ASSURANCE DEPARTMENT

INTRODUCTION

The Quality Assurance Department (QAD) is responsible for the following areas:

- Non-State Section
- International Research Branch
- External Audit Section
- Self-Evaluation Section
- Work with respect to European Schools
- Other QAD achievements

NON STATE SCHOOLS SECTOR

The Non State Schools sector is responsible for Church Schools, Independent Schools, Tuition Centres and Independent Summer Clubs. The main functions of this sector are to register new schools, confirm the appointment of staff recruited by non-state schools and see that all schools follow the National Minimum Curriculum and adhere to the National Minimum Conditions, as listed in the Education Act of 1988 as amended in 2007, and the related legal notices especially the National Minimum Conditions and National Minimum Curriculum.

The main tasks carried out by the Non State Schools Sector during 2009 were:

- The approval of teachers, Kindergarten Assistants and supply/Learning Support Assistants recruited by Non State Schools and, in the case of Church Schools the recruitment also of clerical and other staff and the determination of the relevant salary scale. In the case of Independent schools, parents of students with a statement of individual needs were refunded for expenses incurred for services rendered by supply/Learning Support Assistants under the *Supporting Learners in Independent Schools* scheme.
- Monitoring the quality of teaching and adherence to National Minimum Conditions
- School visits were held regularly in Church and Independent Schools. Officials attended Prize Days, Open Days, School Concerts, School Exhibitions and other activities organised by the schools. Officials attended these activities even when not held during school hours. Visits were also made to independent Kindergarten Centres and to International Schools.
- Regular meetings were held with the Church Secretariat for Catholic Education and Culture to discuss the approval of teachers, administrators and non teaching grades, salary scales and other issues which came up during the year.
- Meetings were also held with representatives of the Malta Environment and Planning Authority to discuss plans submitted to the Sector for the building of new schools or Tuition Centres or the extensions of already licensed schools or Tuition Centres. Visits were also made on site. The sector made use of services by the Foundation for Tomorrow's Schools.
- Collection of statistical data which included school population, absenteeism, staff, SEC examination results and school fees. As of 2001, a record of absenteeism has been kept on a monthly basis. As of 2003, the collection of statistical data has been in line with that collected by State Schools. A database was set up to update statistical returns re. Absentees in Church and Independent Schools on a monthly basis.
- Statistics were upgraded to record also Heads of Department, Guidance teachers, Teacher-Librarians and Health and Safety teachers in Church Secondary Schools and complementary teachers in Church Primary Schools.
- A new database was designed for statistical data re Statemented Individual needs for students in Church and Independent Schools. A due diligence exercise was carried out.
- Ongoing support to Non State Schools in the School Development Planning process was given.
- Queries from the public, as well as from teachers, parents and education officials regarding Non State Schools and Tuition Centres and recruitment of teaching and non teaching staff were answered.
- The Non-State School sector was also represented on the Verdala International School Board of Directors and on the Advisory Board for the project *Hotline for Children over the Internet*.
- School Staff lists were checked against approvals given, recorded in separate folders and schools informed about non approved members of staff where a new application had to be submitted. Data about approved members of teaching staff in Church and Independent Schools was logged and updated regularly.
- A database is being compiled for School Licences for Church and Independent schools. A due diligence exercise is being carried out with regards to licence conditions.
- For the first time, Non-State Summer Schools were registered and certified as per Legal Notice 185 of 2009
- A review of the system used for the registration of Tuition Centres and for renewal of their registrations has just been launched.
- Non-State Schools are encouraged to join the *Eko Skola* project, the waste separation system and other environmental friendly campaigns.

- Management, teaching and other personnel in Church school are invited to conferences/seminar/courses, including induction as for State Schools
- An exercise to digitally record past staff lists has been embarked upon. The staff lists from every Non State School date back to the early eighties.
- Constant liaison is maintained with the Council for the Teaching Profession about the issuing of Temporary and Permanent Warrants

Request for Research

The Non-State Schools Sector processed 40 requests for research in Church and Independent Schools. The research levels were: Doctorate 1; Masters 5; Bachelor 34.

Church and Independent Schools

In October, Non-State Schools were providing education to 23,428 students; 16,444 students in Church Schools and 6,984 in Independent schools

Number of Schools in Non-State Sector

	Pre-Primary	Primary	Secondary	Post-Secondary
Church Schools	32	24	22	2
Independent Schools	22	13	10	3
Total	54	37	32	5

Students Population and Number of Classes in Non-State Sector

School Population (at the beginning of Scholastic Year 2009/2010)				
Church Schools Population				
Sector	Male	Female	Total	Classes
Pre-Primary	478	683	1,161	66
Primary	2,760	4,166	6,926	269
Secondary	3,627	4,007	7,634	306
Post Secondary	375	348	723	18
Total	7,240	9,204	16,444	659

School Population (at the beginning of Scholastic Year 2009/2010)				
Independent School Population				
Sector	Male	Female	Total	Classes
Pre-Primary	822	650	1,472	81
Primary	1,871	1,174	3,045	154
Secondary	1,283	995	2,278	118
Post Secondary	98	91	189	3
Total	4,074	2,910	6,984	356

Teaching Staff in Church and Independent Sector

Church Schools							
Religious Teaching Staff 2009/2010				Lay Teaching Staff 2009/2010			
	Male	Female	Total		Male	Female	Total
Heads of School	8	22	30	Heads of School	5	9	14
Assistant Heads	3	13	16	Assistant Heads	16	41	57
Head of Department	-	-	-	Heads of Department	6	14	20
Complementary Teachers		3	3	Complementary Teachers	-	19	19
Teachers	14	12	26	Teachers	217	690	907
Instructors	-	1	1	Instructors	3	16	19
Supply Graduate Teachers	8	1	9	Supply Graduate Teachers	19	36	55
Supply Teachers	1	3	4	Supply Teachers	17	41	58
Kindergarten Assistants		19	19	Kindergarten Assistants	-	47	47
Learning Support Assistants	-	-	-	Learning Support Assistants	5	115	12
Supply Learning Support Assistant				Supply Learning Support Assistant	36	335	371
Sub Total	34	74	108	Sub total	324	1,363	1,687
Grand Total	Male 358	Female 1,437	Total 1,795				

Independent Schools			
Teaching Staff 2009/2010			
	Male	Female	Total
Heads of School	6	11	17
Assistant Heads	4	4	8
Teachers	81	252	333
Supply Graduate Teachers	26	73	99
Supply Teachers	11	67	78
Kindergarten Assistants	1	92	93
Learning Support Assistants	-	3	3
Supply Learning Support Assistant	-	19	19
Total	129	521	650

Total Number of Teaching Staff in Church and Independent Schools			
Total Staff in Non-State Schools 2009/2010			
	Male	Female	Total
Church Schools	358	1,437	1,795
Independent Schools	129	521	650
Total	487	1,958	2,445

Approvals and renewals of staff

Distribution of approvals processed by the Non-State Schools for staff in Church Schools in 2009	
	Total
Heads of School	5
Assistant Heads	12
Head of Department	9
Complementary Teachers	-
Teachers	154
Supply Graduate Teachers	48
Supply Teachers	29
Kindergarten Assistants	8
Learning Support Assistants	20
Supply Learning Support Assistant	124
Handyman	3
Cleaners	16
Domestic	22
General Hand	2
Secretary	3
Clerks	3
Lab Technician	2
Science Lab Technician	3
Total	463

Distribution of Approvals processed by the Non-State Section for staff in Independent Schools in 2009	
	Table
Heads of School	2
Assistant Heads	2
Teachers	64
Supply Graduate Teachers	51
Supply Teachers	9
Kindergarten Assistants	6
Learning Support Assistants	3
Supply Learning Support Assistant	15
Total	152

Commercial Schools/Tuition Centres

In 2009 there were 60 licensed Commercial Schools and 62 Tuition Centres while there are 2 pending applications for new schools/tuition centres. These applications are held in abeyance because they do not have the relevant permits from the Planning Authority or have not as yet provided the Directorate with the information requested. When dealing with an application for the setting up of a new school or tuition centre, the sector requests detailed information about the school's proposed philosophy, policies, curriculum, teaching programme, MQF levels, MQRIC recognition and teachers' qualifications.

INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH BRANCH

During 2009, the International Research Branch's major commitment was the implementation of international studies and surveys. The remit of the branch is mainly the implementation, coordination and management of international research initiatives at the national level. International research is one of the

resources available within the Department which plays an active role in helping the policy makers and practitioners make informed decisions for school improvement.

Statistics Unit

The compilation and analysis of statistical data is a central activity of the branch. Data is collated from both state and non-state schools as well as from post-compulsory institutions. Data mainly focusing on pupils/students and teaching staff is collated on a quarterly basis. The analysis of data provides objective indicators utilised for planning of educational initiatives and policy formulation by all departments within the Education Directorates. Data is made available, on request to researchers, the media as well as to local and international agencies.

During 2009, the branch continued its collaboration with the Centre for Research on Lifelong Learning (CRELL) and OECD in the international study on indicators on the educational provision for students with disabilities, learning difficulties and disadvantages (SENDDD). The final report “Students with Disabilities, Learning Difficulties and Disadvantages in the Baltic States, South Eastern Europe and Malta” was published by the OECD in October 2009.

Research Unit

One of the functions of the Research Unit is to encourage and monitor research in local education. Such research, including that by university students is conducted in state schools or through the Education Directorates documents. During 2009, the unit assessed and approved 215 requests for research in state schools. The Unit also provided support to local and foreign researchers and foreign research institutes and universities carrying out trans-European research studies on our national education system. The university courses that benefited from the unit’s support are indicated in the following table:

Course	No of Requests
Bachelor of Education	74
PGCE	45
BA/BSc	30
Dipl. in Facilitating Inclusion Education	2
B Psy (Hons)	26
PGDEAM	2
MA/MEd/MSc/MBA	31
PhD	5
Total	215

On completion of their research programme, researchers submit a copy of their dissertation to the Documentation Centre of the Education Division. Thus research carried out in State schools and/or Education Directorates documents can be put in context and the results made available to the areas concerned. In order to promote future studies, these documents are available for reference and perusal at the documentation centre for Senior Staff. The list of these dissertations, accompanied by a short abstract, is also available on the departmental website for easy reference.

Programme for International Students’ Assessment (PISATMI)

In 2009, the Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education was invited to participate in PISA 2009Plus. PISA is an international survey which is the flagship of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Education Directorate with over 65 participating countries. PISA

¹ PISA and OECD/PISA are trademarks of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)

assesses 15 year olds in reading, numerical and scientific literacy and is carried out every three years. PISA2009Plus is a short cycle study in which eight countries among them Malta are participating. This study which is being managed internationally by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) is using the same survey instruments and standards used in PISA 2009. During 2009, the instruments were field trialled in Malta. The main survey will be administered in March 2010.

International Civics and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS)

The purpose of the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS) is to investigate, in a range of countries, the ways in which young people are prepared to undertake their roles as citizens. In pursuit of this purpose the study will report on student achievement in a test of conceptual understandings and competencies in Civics and Citizenship. The international coordination is directed by a consortium consisting of three partner organisations: The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), The National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) in England, and the Laboratorio di Pedagogia Sperimentale (LPS) at the Roma Tre University (Italy). During 2008, the Research Unit drew up a sampling frame for the main study and reviewed the instruments, making the necessary adjustments to the instruments which were translated into Maltese. This gave the opportunity to students to choose either a Maltese language version or an English language version of the instruments. The study was administered in March 2009 in all Maltese secondary schools with two Form 3 classes sampled randomly in each school. Three main instruments were used, a citizenship cognitive test, a European Module and a background questionnaire. A questionnaire was also answered by the Heads of School and by teachers of PSD and Social Studies. The teachers' participation rate was very encouraging with a weighed participation rate of nearly 98.9%. The student weighed participation rate was around 93%. Coding, data entry and data cleaning was carried out during the summer. The first report on this study is scheduled for publication around mid-2010.

Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS 2011)

Malta through the Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education, will be participating for the first time in PIRLS. This is the assessment of pupils aged 9.5 years in reading literacy. The assessment measures trends in children's reading literacy achievement and policy and practices related to literacy. Besides the achievement test in literacy, the study collects background information about the school, the pupils, and the teachers. During 2009, the work included the writing of question items, the translation of literacy passages into Maltese and the localisation of background questionnaires.

Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) - 2011

As both PIRLS and TIMSS international assessments will be conducted in 2011, this cycle will provide a unique opportunity for international assessment at Year 5 level. By participating in both PIRLS and TIMSS for Year 5 pupils, participating countries will be able to have a comprehensive picture of pupils' achievement in reading, mathematics, and science, with a rich array of contextual background information. TIMSS 2011 for Year 5 pupils will consist of an achievement test in mathematics and science as well as a student's background questionnaire. Questionnaires are also administered to the class teacher and also to the Head of the sampled school. During 2009, the Research Branch drew up a sampling frame of all primary schools in Malta from which a number of schools will be sampled to participate in the field-trial.

Eurydice National Unit

The Maltese Eurydice Unit has participated in all the work carried out by the Eurydice Network throughout 2009. The objective of the Unit is to monitor, draft and disseminate reliable and comparable information on the Maltese education system within the wider landscape of European education. The work of the Eurydice Network includes descriptive studies, comparative analysis as well as the collation of indicators and statistical data.

During 2009, the Unit accomplished the following projects:

- Drafted the Maltese contribution to the electronic publication *Organisation of School Year 2009-2010* - a comparative analysis on how the school year is organised across the EU member states, EFTA countries and acceding countries. The information collated covers both primary and secondary education and includes national data on the length of the school year, the timetable for the start of each school year and the distribution and length of school holidays. This also includes the academic calendar of post-secondary and tertiary level institutions.
- Coordinated the drafting of a short report on Higher Education for the Leuven Ministerial Conference in April 2009. The publication *Higher Education 2009 – Developments in the Bologna Process* presents an overview of the progress made in all 46 signatory countries in the ten years since the Bologna Declaration was signed.
- Coordinated the drafting of a report on a study of gender differences in educational outcomes. This study is aimed at gathering information on different national situations, policies and measures taken to tackle gender inequality in education. This was a contribution of the Eurydice Network requested by the Swedish presidency during the second half of 2009.
- Coordinated the second phase of data collection which included the professional development of teachers and the testing and assessment of pupils. The study *Arts and Culture Education in Europe* was published in October. It gives a detailed picture of the aims and objectives of arts education, its organisation, the provision of extracurricular activities as well as initiatives for the development of such education at school. The findings of this study inter alia, contributed to the European Year of Creativity and Innovation in 2009.
- Finalised the drafting of a working document on the testing of pupils which was discussed during a conference organised by the Czech EU presidency in May. This study gives a detailed picture of the context and organisation of national tests in 30 European countries and the use made of test results in informing education policy and practice and in guiding the school career of pupils. The comparative study *National Testing of Pupils in Europe: Objectives, Organisation and Use of Results* was published in September.
- Collated data and information for the 2009 Edition of *Key Data on Education in Europe*. The 121 indicators in the publication provide an overall picture of the education systems and policies in place across Europe, from pre-primary to higher education level. They also address horizontal issues such as demographic trends, financing of education systems, teacher status and training, school autonomy and quality assurance. The study was published in August.
- Updated the summary fiche on Maltese education to reflect developments which have taken place during 2009. This is updated every six months.
- Provided an information service by regularly answering to the many requests for information regarding various aspects of our education system. These requests originate both from local as well as trans-border sources.
- Promoted Eurydice work through the dissemination of its publications and other material among Maltese stakeholders.

EXTERNAL AUDIT SECTION AND SELF-EVALUATION SECTION

In 2009 the two Assistant Directors in charge of the External Audit Section and the Self Evaluation worked together on a number of projects and initiatives.

- *Induction programme for Heads and Assistant Heads on School Development Planning*: Ten seminars were held over 2008/ 2009 at the Handaq Qormi Boys' Secondary School and the National Curriculum Centre to explain in detail how the school development plan should be developed. This training involved those heads and assistant heads who had not been called for the seminars held in March. This course explained in detail how action plans were to be drawn up to be effective and also the

standardisation of the terminology used together with the standardisation in the overall presentation of this document.

- *Induction programme for newly-appointed teachers:* Teachers who had been newly appointed in September 2008 were called by the QAD for the second part of their induction. Although this seminar was on a voluntary basis, held at Robert Sammut Hall, practically all teachers were present and participated in the organised workshops.

In September 2009, a new Induction Seminar took place as part of a reconceptualised Induction Programme. This seminar covered three days and was held at Qormi Boys' Secondary School. This entailed preparing a programme that would help introduce new teachers into the profession by teaching them about the Education Act; the Directorates; the different Departments, the reforms under way; get them acquainted with their respective College Principals, discuss their aspirations and concerns, learn about the customer care services that exist and get to know how to fill in their 'Reflective Practice Journal'. Teacher Self Evaluation was given due importance on the last day. The programme saw the involvement of the Permanent Secretary, the two Directors General and the participation of various Directors and College Principals. The sessions included short presentations, workshops, question time and two presentations from two schools to introduce the Seminar. A questionnaire was filled on the last day, enabling the QAD to analyse the feedback and improve or add to next year's Induction Seminar.

- *Meetings with the Council of Heads of all ten colleges:* The QAD is following a strategy of engaging with Colleges and schools in different ways with the two main aims being that of providing support and evaluating practices to see that standards and a quality education are provided. Meetings with all Heads of Schools during their Council of Heads meetings were organised by the QAD, starting in 2008 and continuing in 2009, as it was felt to be of the utmost importance that the department knew through first-hand experience, the heads' reactions towards the new PMPDP. We also explained and launched the first part of the document School Improvement through Self-Evaluation and its impact on School Development Planning and to explain the way the QAD will function vis-à-vis quality assurance. The main intent was to clearly explain to the schools how the QAD will function over the next few years. We aim to provide support through continuous professional development/training sessions to school leaders in the State and Non-State Sectors; preparation of documents to support schools in school development planning and school self-evaluation; and preparation of the documents that will help schools adequately prepare themselves for external audits.
- *Reporting on the School Development Plans:* The QAD went through all the School Development Plans documents which had been sent by all schools within the colleges. A report for each college was drawn up explaining in detail the requirements of what should be included in such a document to be of relevance to the school itself during self-evaluation and to help in the standardisation of the document.

Other Initiatives by the Audit Section

Various other activities for which the section was directly responsible or else indirectly involved included:

- *Handing over to the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations the monitoring of four NGOs:* This entailed handing over all duties relating to monitoring, reporting and recommendations for the release of public officers who were released on paid leave on grounds of public policy to work with Voluntary Organisations (the Malta Islamic Welfare Fund, Paolo Freire Institute, Centru Tbexbix and Forum for Justice and Cooperation).
- *Interviews at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs:* As MEDC representative on the interviewing board, an Assistant Director was involved in interviewing and choosing candidates who had applied for the DAAD scholarships in various universities in Germany.
- *Seeking membership in SICI:* The QAD was accepted as associate member of SICI, the Standing International Conference of Inspectorates. This is a grouping of national and regional inspectorates of education in Europe with over 25 members. It provides professional development services to its member organisations and contributes to the development of education in Europe with emphasis based on direct observation of school practices for school improvement.

- *Review of the teaching of Social Studies and its syllabus*: An ADE was a member on the Social Studies reviewing team. The team visited various schools in all the Colleges and had meetings with groups of Social Studies teachers to gain insight into the subject. Other meetings were held with Heads of Schools and pupils themselves. A number of draft reports were presented and discussed with the Permanent Secretary and the Director General. Now the team is preparing the final piece of work, a questionnaire to the parents of the pupils from Years 1 to Years 6 to ensure comprehensive input from all stakeholders.

Other Initiatives by the Self Evaluation Section

Various other activities for which the section was directly responsible or else indirectly involved included:

- *Induction Programme for New Teachers Employed by the Directorate for Educational Services (DES)*: A proposal for an Induction Programme for New Teachers Employed by the Directorate for Educational Services was discussed and drawn up. It is part of a comprehensive strategy for induction and mentoring provision in the state compulsory schooling sector. The design of this proposal is based on parameters outlined in the 2006 Amendments to the Education Act and the 2007 Reform Agreement. It runs over two years. Letters were sent to the newly appointed teachers informing them of the program which they were to follow for their own benefit and as support to their career.
- *Protocol for Mentoring Programmes*: A protocol for Mentoring Programmes was drawn up. This was done in compliance with Article 19 (1) of the Government-MUT Collective Agreement (July 2007). The QAD therefore launched a Mentoring Programme wherein School Administrative Staff were being supported by their respective College Principals to provide up-skilling and mentoring services to staff members who might need it.

Review of Design and Technology in State and Non-State Schools in Malta

A review of the current practice in the teaching and learning of Design and Technology in State and Non-State Schools has been carried out. The purpose of this research was to determine whether the syllabi provide the definition of the rationale of the subject, an inquiry on the qualifications and current engagement of the teaching force, a study of the resourcing of the subject, students' examination performance, the role, utility and gain of the Design and Technology Learning Centre and the situation of the subject in the Primary Sector. Visits to schools, interviews with teachers, assessments for the resourcing of technology workshops and feedback from administrative staff were all carried out. The final report will be presented to the Permanent Secretary and the Director General in early 2010.

School Self-Evaluation Exercise

As part of the support provided by QAD, a number of school visits were carried out to discuss School Development Plan Documents and to offer advice on how to carry out school self-evaluations for their respective schools. In certain cases, Staff Professional Sessions were carried out to offer guidance on how to mentor action plans, what success criteria to use and discuss various tools to carry out a self evaluation of their School Development Plan.

Malta Qualifications Council

In January 2009, an ADE within the QAD was nominated a member of the Malta Qualifications Council. She participated by attending Committee Meetings, Conferences and other events connected with Malta's National Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning. The Malta Qualifications Council works in partnership with learners, employers and training and education providers to achieve and maintain excellence as a contribution towards the national effort for competitiveness. Towards the end of the year the MQC issued a report for further consultation (2009) on the *Referencing of the Malta Qualifications*

Framework to the European Qualifications Framework and the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area.

Professional Development

The ADE attended various courses and conferences for self-enrichment, both locally and abroad. A key experience was the Workshop on *QualiTraining at Grassroots Level* by the European Centre for Modern Languages in Graz, Austria, 22 – 24 September 2009.

WORK WITH RESPECT TO EUROPEAN SCHOOLS

In 2009 the two new Maltese inspectors for the European Schools (ES) were confirmed in their posts. Their main responsibilities were:

- taking up their role as ES inspectors as per the ES remit;
- supporting and training the teachers of Maltese in ES;
- discussing with the ES authorities to ensure equitable provision of Maltese lessons;
- assisting in making the case to the University of Malta for the comparability of ES BAC system and results;
- continuing the work of developing the ES and BAC exam syllabi.

In 2009 there was a total of 55 Maltese students in European Schools, of which 16 in Luxembourg, 38 in Brussels and 1 in Helsinki. This significant increase in numbers meant an increase in teaching load. Indeed, a teacher was selected and formally seconded for a full-time teaching post in Maltese and English at the Brussels Uccle ES, whilst another was selected by the same school for a part-time post in the teaching of Maltese.

The QAD organised a meeting for ES parents in Malta in August 2009 in which it became clear that the issue of what curriculum package should be followed by Maltese ES students was not entirely resolved. To facilitate communication with and amongst parents and also to provide links to useful materials, an eForum was set up and is being web-mastered by QAD staff. Thereafter, the QAD took an active role in synthesising the different claims that were being made by parents for the curriculum of their children and the role of Maltese in it. A document presenting and analysing these different positions was presented to the Ministry for its consideration.

A meeting was held with the Registrar of the University of Malta to discuss the comparability of BAC for access to University courses. A decision by the University Senate is expected in early 2010.

OTHER QAD ACHIEVEMENTS

Recruitment

In August, the Directorate started the process for the recruitment of new EOs. At the end of the process five new EOs were recruited with the QAD, four for the Audit and Internal Evaluation Sections and one for the Non-State Section. An induction programme for these new EOs was developed and implemented.

National Literacy Strategy

In October the Department was given the additional responsibility of directing the National Literacy Strategy. This entailed providing direction for the Strategy Team, composed of two newly selected EOs, and the various literacy support groups of peripatetic staff, namely, the Whole School Approach Group, the Core Competences Group, the Malta Writing Programme Group and the Complementary Teachers Group. The first step of the implementation of the Strategy was the use of the Core Competences checklists for Maltese and English by all early primary school teachers as a point of reference for the

teaching/learning of identified learners with core competences needs that were referred to Complementary teachers. Two explanatory meetings were also held for heads of school in Malta and Gozo. The next step will be the training for and development of Action Plans by primary school heads of school during 2010.

Council for the Teaching Profession

Through its Director, the QAD is also represented on the Council for the Teaching Profession, with regular meetings being held.

National Curriculum Review Committee

As a member of the National Curriculum Review Committee, the QAD Director also attended regular meetings during the year.

SANDRO SPITERI

Director (Quality Assurance Department)

Directorate for Educational Services

Mission Statement

To ensure the effective and efficient operation and delivery of services to the colleges and state schools within an established framework of decentralisation and autonomy.

GENERAL FUNCTIONS

The Directorate for Educational Services (DES), in constant collaboration with the colleges and schools, has the general function of planning, providing and allocating the resources, human and otherwise, services, and learning tools, both of a pedagogical, psychosocial, managerial and operative nature and other ancillary support tools, as required in the state colleges, schools and educational institutions, and to encourage and facilitate their networking and cooperation.

The DES was set up through the Education Act in July 2007 and started to operate functionally in November 2008. The Directorate has three departments: Human Resources Development, School Resources Management and Student Services. The DES also oversees the mode in which the ten state colleges operate and function. In its first two years of operation, the DES gave great emphasis to recruitment within the Directorate, the development of student services and the overhaul and reform of school resources management.

The emphasis on recruitment resulted in a record 34 calls for application in 2009. While the regular calls for teaching grades were processed, a great emphasis was placed on student service recruitment.

Another area given great importance during 2009 was that of customer care. While the Customer Care Unit has been beefed up, a customer care policy has also been drafted. The DES has also planned out a marketing campaign for the teaching profession for 2010. The DES gave great importance to maximising human resources and a review of the classification exercise was carried out to ensure the best possible use of human resources. Towards the end of 2009, the DES also started to explore how to further promote recruitment of technical and ancillary services in schools.

In the area of student services, recruitment of psycho-social services has been a top priority. This means that students will receive enhanced services to eliminate any obstacles to learning and entitlement. The DES also worked extensively on the reform within special schools.

In the Department for School Resources Management, the main focus during 2009 was the restructuring of the Technical Services Branch with the introduction of College Precincts Officers, the maintenance and refurbishment of schools, review of the school transport system and improving health and safety services in schools.

MICHELINE SCIBERRAS

Director General (Educational Services)

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

The Human Resources Development Department (HRDD) is responsible for:

- Planning
- Recruitment
- Performance Appraisal
- Customer and Support Staff

GENERAL OVERVIEW

During the year under review St Benedict College B'Bugia Primary A & B and St Nicholas College Rabat Primary A & B were amalgamated into B'Bugia Primary C and Rabat Primary C, while St Ignatious College Qormi Boys' Secondary was closed down.

Staff

Professional staff attached to the Human Resources Development Department is as follows:

Head Office			
	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
Director	1	0	1
Assistant Directors	0	1	1
Service Managers	3	1	4
Education Officers	1	1	2
Total	5	3	8

Recruitment/Development of Teaching Staff

When schools reopened in September 2009, there was a shortage of Heads in the following schools:
Primary: Bahrija, Gharghur, Luqa, Mtarfa, Safi, Senglea, St Venera, Żabbar A, Xaghra and Żebbuġ (Gozo); *Secondary:* Naxxar Boys', Floriana Boys' School, St Venera Boys' Junior Lyceum. The total number of teachers recruited (Primary & Secondary) was 165, as follows:

Primary			
	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
	2	37	39
Special Education			
	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
	2	6	8
Secondary			
<i>Subject</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
Art	2	0	2
Biology	1	0	1
Biology/Int. Science	1	0	1
Business Studies	2	1	3
Chemistry	1	0	1
Computer Studies	2	1	3
Design & Technology (Food & Textiles)	0	2	2
Design & Technology (Resistant Material)	1	1	2
Design and Technology (F/T & H/E)	0	3	3
English	2	9	11
Geography	2	2	4
German	0	3	3
Graphical Communication	1	0	1
Guitar	1	0	1
History	0	1	1
Home Economics	0	4	4
ICT	0	4	4

Int. Science	1	0	1
Italian	0	6	6
Maltese	6	12	18
Maths	5	5	10
PE	6	3	9
Physics	2	1	3
Physics/Integrated Science	1	0	1
Piano	0	1	1
PSD	1	14	15
Religion	3	3	6
Social Studies	0	1	1
Total	41	77	118

Number of Schools

Schools			
	Boys	Girls	Total
Kindergarten Centres	-	-	62 ⁽¹⁾
Primary Schools	-	-	68
Junior Lyceums	4	5	9
Secondary Schools	9	6	15
Secondary School (College)	4	1	5
Schools	1	1	2
Post-Secondary Schools	-	-	2
Total			166

¹ These centres are situated on the same premises as the primary schools with the exception of Mosta and an additional centre at Paola.

Staff in State Schools

	Pre-Primary		Primary		Secondary		Inclusive Education		Post-Secondary		Total		
	M	F	M	F	M	M	M	F	M	F	M	F	T
Heads of School ⁽²⁾			32	24	16	10			1	1	49	35	84
Assistant Heads of School ⁽³⁾			40	85	57	48			4	2	101	135	236
Subject Coordinators ⁽⁴⁾			1	1	29	26			9	-	39	27	66
Teachers ⁽⁵⁾			124	576	619	988			100	83	843	1,647	2,490
Resource Teachers			4	6	22	23			1	0	27	29	56
Instructors ⁽⁶⁾			10	71	31	30			1	1	42	102	144
Part-time Instructors ⁽⁷⁾			0	5	2	2			0	0	2	2	4
Temporary Teachers			0	1	2	1			0	0	2	2	4
Retired Teachers			1	5	1	2			2	0	4	7	11
Supply Teachers			14	29	9	23			8	3	31	55	86
Kindergarten Asst. (KGA) ⁽⁸⁾	-	312									-	49	49
KGAs II	0	49									-	49	49
KGAS I	0	22									-	22	22
KGAs (Spec. Educ.) ⁽⁹⁾							-	79			-	79	79
P/T KGAs (Spec. Educ.) ⁽¹⁰⁾							-	3			-	3	3
Supply KGAs ⁽¹¹⁾	-	7									-	7	7
Learning Support Assistants (LSA) ⁽¹²⁾							-	11			-	11	11
Learning Support Assistants II (LSA II) ⁽¹²³⁾							10	288			10	288	298
Supply Learning Support Assistants (SLSA) ⁽¹⁴⁾							10	780			71	780	851
Supply Learning Support Assistants (SLSA) (Spec. Educ.) ⁽¹⁵⁾							-	32			-	32	32
Total	0	390	226	803	788	1,153	81	1,193	126	90	1,221	3,629	4,850

² Not including 3 Primary Heads on unpaid/pre-retirement leave, 1 Secondary Head on long leave*

³ Not including 8 Primary Assistant Heads on pre-retirement/parental/unpaid leave, and 5 Secondary Asst Heads on pre-retirement/maternity/unpaid. **Including** 10 Primary Acting Heads, 3 Secondary Acting Heads

⁴ Not including 1 (Secondary) on non-teaching duties and 1 (Post-Sec) on long leave

⁵ Not including 77 Primary Teachers on maternity/parental leave, responsibility, study and unpaid leave, 8 Secondary Teachers and 2 Post Secondary Teachers on non-teaching duties, 218 Secondary Teachers and 8 Post Secondary Teachers on long leave,

⁶ Not including 5 Primary Instructors on maternity/parental leave and emigration leave, 1 Secondary Instructor on non-teaching duties, 2 Secondary Instructors on long leave and 1 Post Secondary Instructor on non-teaching duties

⁷ Not including 2 Primary Part Time Instructors on parental leave/clerical duties

⁸ Not including 8 KGAs on pre-retirement Leave, 3 KGAs on long sick leave, 2 KGAs on unpaid leave, 3 KGAs on parental leave, 3 KGAs on maternity leave and 3 KGAs on clerical duties

⁹ Not including 2 KGAs (Spec. Educ) on maternity leave and 3 KGAs on pre-retirement leave

¹⁰ Not including 1 PT KGA (Spec. Educ) on responsibility leave

¹¹ Not including 1 SKGA on long sick leave and 1 SKGA on unpaid leave

¹² Not including 1 LSA on responsibility leave

¹³ Not including 13 LSAs II on maternity leave, 6 LSAs II on parental leave and 1 LSA on unpaid study leave

¹⁴ Not including 23 SLSAs on maternity leave, 10 SLSAs on parental leave, 1 SLSA on responsibility leave, 4 SLSAs on unpaid study leave and 1 SLSA on long sick leave

¹⁵ Not including 2 SLSAs (Spec. Educ) on unpaid study leave

* long leave includes: maternity, parental, emigration, missionary, study, responsibility and other unpaid leave

Student Population and Number of Classes in State Schools

School Population (at the beginning of scholastic year 2009/2010)				
<i>Sector</i>	<i>Population</i>			<i>No. of Classes</i>
	Male	Female	Total	
Kindergarten	2,620	2,321	4,941	357
Primary Schools	7,852	6,758	14,610	820
Junior Lyceums	1,915	4,350	6,265	278
Secondary Schools	2,387	2,433	4,820	258
Post-Secondary Schools	1,033	1,371	2,404	NA
Colleges	3,235	750	3,985	197
Boys/Girls' School	47	21	68	6
Total	19,089	18,004	37,093	1,916

In-Service Course for Heads of School

For the first time, the Human Resources Development Department organised an Induction Course for newly appointed Heads of School and Acting Heads of School (Primary and Secondary). The course entitled *Quality Management in Schools* consisted of six sessions. It tackled the following topics: Team Building, Administrative Matters, Accounts and School Transport, School Leadership, Classroom visits, Classification and Time-tabling and Education Services offered to schools. The course was attended by 28 participants.

In-Service Management Course for Assistant Heads

An In-Service course was organised for newly appointed Assistant Heads (Primary and Secondary schools). The course entitled *Improving Quality Management in Schools* was spread over five days. It tackled the following topics: Leadership, Customer Care Skills, Curricular Issues, School Accounts & Transport, Administrative Matters, Classification, Time-Tabling, Team Building Skills and Student Support Services offered to schools. The course was attended by 32 Assistant Heads.

SIS TRAINING CENTRE

During the year, the Department, in collaboration with the Schools Information System (SIS), conducted training courses in the various SIS software programs, aimed at newly-appointed School Administrators and School Secretaries/Clerk. These courses included:

- training School Secretaries/Clerks in STS (Schools, Teachers, Students) Programme and Cash Accounts Programme,
- training School Administrators in the Facility Timetable software, including a course in Gozo for Gozitan Administrators, and
- workshops for Heads of Schools in the Facility Timetable software were held before the start of the new scholastic year.

The SIS support team provided school clerks with the required support during the summer recess to perform the Year-End update for their students' database.

At the start of the new scholastic year, the SIS team conducted the Good Shepherd Project for the eleventh consecutive year. This project identifies children of five years of age, whose parents have not registered them in any school according to the provisions of the Education Act 1988.

The main project for 2009 was the enhancement of the new STS Database System. Now that the STS system is fully running in schools, the HRDD in collaboration with SIS is in the final stages of drastically removing most of the data that was collected from schools in the Quarterly Returns, three times a year. This is being done since now most of the data requested in these forms is readily available centrally through STS.

At the end of 2009, the HRDD through the SIS Team embarked on a project to offer the usage of STS to Non-State Schools. During December, presentation meetings with the Heads of Church Schools were conducted. The aim of this project is to ultimately have the data of all students on one centralised system, which will help to analyse data faster.

Inclusive Education

During 2009, the number of Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) increased from 1,269 to 1,320.

Interviews following a call for applications for Supply Learning Support Assistants (SLSAs) to cater for Special Needs students in mainstream and special schools were held during April 2009 - 51 candidates were successful in the two A Levels section while 31 were successful in the corresponding one A Level section. All successful candidates were employed by December 2009. The majority are presently attending the course organised by the Student Services Department designed to cater for LSAs in charge of students with Individual Educational Needs.

At the close of 2009, the number of students benefitting from LSA support in both mainstream and special schools reached the 1,971 mark.

Customer Care Services

The Customer Care Services incorporate:

- Reception of customers at the Head Office both through telephone and at the Reception: The Reception has been organised in order that customers are received in a professional manner and directed to the right sections both through telephone and also when they visit the Head Office in Floriana. The Reception had contact with an average of 14,000 customers. Staff attended a number of training sessions in Customer Care, Communication Skills, Assertiveness and Teamwork. IT training has also been attended in Word, Email and Excel.
- Customer Care for the Directorate of Educational Services and also other Directorates at Head Office:
 - *Recruitment one-stop shop*: a one-stop-shop for recruitment and engagement of all new employees (includes welcoming new recruits, filling of forms (FS4, ETC Engagement Form, NI 12, Treasury Form, Salary Form for Paypoint, Acceptance Form, Declaration for Social Security Benefits and Personal Record Sheet) for recruitment was developed. This was possible through the close collaboration of mainly three sections, that is, the Secondary and Primary Sections, the Customer Care Service within the HRDD and the Human Resources Branch of the Corporate Services Department;
 - *Signature of Definite Contracts*: together with Secondary and Primary Sections, takes care of the signing of all the definite and indefinite contracts of Supply Teachers and Supply Learning Support Assistants (over 314 contracts signed since October);
 - *Call for Applications*: receipt of all calls for applications issued by the various directorates and departments except for those received by the Ministry.

- *Influenza A (H1N1) Helpline*: managed a helpline for the Influenza A (H1N1) – 25 calls as from launch of service;
- *Coordination of the Receipt of Applications for Evening Courses*: coordinated in conjunction with the LLL Directorate;
- *Hospitality*: developed better hospitality for all those who use the Foyer, Despott Hall and the Policy Board Room;
- *Contacts with customers*: a total of 34,079 customer contacts (10,488 face-to-face; 23,591 via telephone) were made during 2009. Contacts concerned various issues ranging from information and receipt of applications, salaries, information about various services offered in schools and Education in Malta and staff related issues. Customer requests were solved either immediately when information was available or else through collaboration with the various sections within the directorates;
- *Participation in Education 22 Programme Perspettiva*: collaborated with Education 22 in the production of the programme Perspettiva – on a 10-minute slot dedicated to the Customer Care and three other slots in order to promote the various services offered by the Education Directorates;
- *Training of the Customer Care Staff*: staff underwent regular and intensive training on Communication Skills, Customer Care skills, Emotional Intelligence, Teamwork, Dealing with Difficult Situations and also the services offered within the Education Directorates. This enabled the Customer Care officials to offer a better and more efficient service;
- *Marketing of the Teaching Profession*: a DVD on the Teaching Profession bearing the name *L-Għalliem fil-Klassi Llum* was produced as part of the marketing campaign in order to promote the teaching profession.
- **Staff Support Service**: counselling to staff on performance related issues through the services of two part-time counsellors; and training on soft skills and other issues for all staff within the Education Directorates.
 - *Marketing of Service*: the staff support continued its sessions to introduce the service within various schools - service was presented to more than 60 schools in 2009;
 - *Opening Hours*: fixed opening hours established in order for employees to be able to avail themselves of the service. However most sessions are held through appointments rather than through drop-in service;
 - *Contacts*: total number of contacts were as follows:

Type of Users	Users	Sessions
Parents	53	72
Teaching/Non-teaching Employees	56	139
Total	109	211

- *Training for Non-Teaching Staff*: 28 non-teaching staff benefitted from a 21-hour course in Training in Communication and Customer Care Skills and Teamwork.

Planning

The Planning Section of the HRD Department provided the directorates with analysis, recommendations and support on a number of matters, namely:

- Classification and time-tabling to address the teacher shortage in particular subjects (Design and Technology, HE, Integrated Science, Physics, Chemistry, Biology);
- Redeployment exercises to ensure a fairer distribution of human resources (Inclusion support Staff and Technical Support Staff);
- Improvements to the personnel information database (reporting tool);
- Design and Technology Review;
- National Curriculum Framework;
- Early years Sector;
- Higher Education Sector;
- Transition Reform;
- College System.

Recruitment/Promotion Section

The Recruitment/Promotion section is responsible for the issuing of all calls for application pertaining to the Education Grades, from Learning Support Assistants to Assistant Directors, Psychologists and Social Workers, in the Directorate for Educational Services.

In the case of Regular Teachers, which attracted the largest number of applicants (vide appendix A), 37 Selection Boards were set up. Results were published as follows:

- *Approved by PSC on 20/08/2009:* Arabic, Art, Biology, Business Studies, Chemistry, Computer Studies, Design & Technology - Food & Textiles, Design & Technology - Resistant Materials & Electronics, English, European Studies, Geography, Italian, Maltese, Marketing, Physics, Primary, Spanish;
- *Approved by PSC on 27/08/2009:* French, German, History, Home Economics, Mathematics, Physical Education, Special Education, Religion, PSD, Information Technology, Piano, Music, Violin, Theory of Music, Classical Guitar;
- *Approved by PSC on 03/09/2009:* Integrated Science, Social Studies;
- *Approved by PSC on 10/09/2009:* Graphical Communication;
- *Approved by PSC on 24/09/2009:* Systems of Knowledge

In addition, a substantial number of calls for applications were processed and published whilst a total of 518 recommendations for appointments in various positions were made to the Public Service Commission and the Management and Personnel Office for verification and approval.

Posting of Students for Teaching Practice/Observation/School Experience

The Directorate of Educational Services is represented by the Human Resources Development Department on the Teaching Practice Committee of the Faculty of Education.

Students following the Bachelor of Education degree course are posted in state, private and church schools for a six-week teaching experience, for weekly class observation or for school experience sessions. The following table provides a calendar when each activity took place.

Primary	Teaching Practice	Class Observation	School Experience
1st Yr Students	Apr - May	Nov - Mar	Nov - Dec
2nd Yr Students	Feb - Apr		
3rd Yr Students	Nov - Dec		
4th Yr Students	Nov - Dec		

Secondary	Teaching Practice	Class Observation	School Experience
1st Yr Students		Nov - Mar	
2nd Yr Students	Mar - May	Nov - Mar	
3rd Yr Students	Feb - Apr		
4th Yr Students	Nov - Dec		
PGCE	Feb - Apr Nov - Dec		Jan - Feb Apr - June

The schools taking BEduc (Hons) and PGCE students determine their own needs and student teachers are posted accordingly, as much as possible. Schools take full responsibility of the students placed in their schools. In this way, both parties involved benefit to the maximum from their placement in schools. During the whole process, Heads of School, Assistant Heads, Subject Coordinators and teachers are encouraged to participate in the tutoring, mentoring and supervision of student teachers.

At the request of, and in conjunction with, the Teaching Practice Coordinator of the Faculty of Education, a total of 794 placements in state, private and church schools were given to B.Educ/PGCE students for their teaching practice or school experience and observation during 2009, as follows:

<i>Primary</i>							
1 st Year		2 nd Year		3 rd Year		4 th Year	
<i>Observation</i>		<i>Teaching Practice</i>		<i>Teaching Practice</i>		<i>Teaching Practice</i>	
8 M	92 F	4 M	34 F	3 M	34 F	0 M	14 F
100		38		37		14	
<i>Secondary</i>							
1 st Year		2 nd Year		3 rd Year		4 th Year	
<i>Observation</i>		<i>School Experience</i>		<i>Teaching Practice</i>		<i>Teaching Practice</i>	
34 M	63 F	31 M	77 F	14 M	72 F	13 M	68 F
97		108		86		81	
<i>PGCE</i>							
<i>Teaching Practice</i>				<i>Teaching Practice</i>			
37 M		106 F		23 M		67 F	
143				90			

ALFRED MALLIA

Director (Human Resources Development Department)

DEPARTMENT OF SCHOOL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

INTRODUCTION

The Department of School Resources Management is one of the three departments that make up the Directorate for Educational Services. The department consists of three main areas of operation, namely the Technical Services Area, the Educational Facilities Area and the ICT in Education Area, each led by a Service Manager.

The *Service Manager (Technical Services)* is responsible for liaising with the Foundation for Tomorrow's Schools in its programme of new school buildings in line with the Ministry's policy. He is also responsible for major and minor refurbishment, embellishment and overall improvement of the State Primary, Secondary and Post Secondary schools. One major Task Force that is responsible for this school enhancement is the Technical Services Branch that has under its wings 109 members of technical operators whose work, up to the end of this year, was facilitated by co-workers acting as leading hands.

The *Service Manager (Educational Facilities)* is responsible for ensuring that all operations of the state schools and the Directorate's sections will be serviced in their everyday administrative processes. A number of roles within this sector this year were operated under the auspices of the Director, Corporate Services. The Service Manager for this area has only very recently been appointed; a number of departmental sections as defined by the call for applications have been put under his charge. These include the Health and Safety issues that arise at College School levels, the deployment of school funds, the Green Leaders' Initiative, Data Protection issues and the Better Regulation Strategy. The Health and Safety Unit is one important Unit that forms part of the School Resources Management Department. Up to this year, this Unit was headed by the Education Officer, Health and Safety. This unit is serviced by a number of teachers. The School Resources Management Department boasts of a Health and Safety Unit which has

achieved quite a lot in past years, and plays a leading role whenever we participate in European and local fora.

One important, extra-demanding and delicate section that falls under this Service Area is the School Transport Section. This section has been operating under the direct responsibility of the Director, School Resources Management since the very start.

The *ICT in Education Services Manager* is responsible for the software and hardware teaching and learning needs of all schools to operate within with the eLearning strategy of the Government's policy. This Service Manager is responsible to research new methodologies and technologies that need to be taken up by schools and teaching staff to enable them to adopt modern state of the art pedagogies to meet holistic standards. The major strengths of this area include:

- the commitment towards extending the infrastructural networks in schools to make the internet accessible to all state schools, introducing WIFI in as many of the schools as possible;
- the deployment, management and upkeep of all laptops that have been given to state school teachers and other teaching grades;
- the deployment, management and upkeep of all desktops that have been rolled out to state schools.

Important Developments

In 2009, the Department of School Resources Management has undergone two important changes that will surely help it reach its targets better.

Up till the middle of the year, the Technical Services Branch used to service not only College Schools but also a number of outlying stations of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport. It was felt on various occasions that the Technical Services Branch used to dedicate a high percentage of its attention towards the refurbishment and maintenance works of the outlying stations. A new post of Assistant Director Precincts was set up to take responsibility of this area under the remit of the Director, Corporate Services. A number of workers were transferred to this new section.

In the meantime, the interviews for the College Precincts Officers were held, the results were published and nine College Precincts Officers were appointed by the end of the year. The process of appointing the tenth Officer is in hand. A training programme for the newly appointed Precincts Officers was prepared and its execution is being implemented as part of an overall induction programme.

A one-day Training Development Seminar was held for the technical personnel. Participants in this seminar included the whole Technical task force which consists of the technical tradesmen and support staff of nine different trades, the Gardeners, the College Precincts Officers and the Service Managers. The aim of the seminar was to bring together the various levels of the technical personnel and to explain to them the new College approach towards refurbishment, embellishment and the cleaning initiatives being undertaken as from the beginning of 2010. Apart from the various presentations given, ten workshops led by the newly appointed College Precincts Officers, offered the opportunity to technical staff to present their ideas about the way forward in this new initiative. The workers' proposals have been carefully considered and will be implemented wherever possible.

School Transport Management

The Directorate's Transport Services consist of two sections, namely, the Transport Pool, currently operated under the auspices of the Director, Corporate Services, and the School Transport Section operated by the School Resources Management Department.

The School Transport Section is responsible for providing transport to approximately 17,000 students every day, to and from State Primary and Secondary Schools. This mammoth task has a route register of

680 routes for mainstream students together with 30 other routes for students with special needs. The mainstream transport service is rendered by three major providers, namely, the Mini Bus Cooperative, the Unscheduled Bus Service, and the Public Transport Association. This service is covered by an agreement that expires in 2010. The transport of students with Special needs is partially carried out by private contractors operating under contractual agreements and partly by the Directorate's Special Transport Service.

Following the new transport reporting software that was developed by the School Transport Section itself, better control is being exercised over the way reports of transport trips to and from schools reaches the Accounts section of the Directorates. Training has been given to school staff about the way data is collected and forwarded to the Directorate. A comprehensive database giving information about the students taking all routes has been compiled by the College schools; this data has been entered in the STS software that connects all schools. The information that is collected from STS is monitored and analysed with a view towards improving and controlling the Transport Service.

Apart from the study that had been commissioned by the Ministry to recommend ways of improving upon the current mode of operation of this service, the School Resources Management Department has carried out its own analysis. Recommendations are being put forward in an effort towards enhancing the services rendered to students entitled for school transport.

The draft Safe Route to Schools policy that has been compiled together with ADT and other government entities during 2008 is still awaiting approval.

During the summer of 2009, a new tender for the transport of students with special needs was issued through the Department of Contracts. There were four bidders for this tender. The tender was awarded to three providers, who are currently providing transport facilities to students with special needs in both mainstream and special schools, using lifter-vans and chauffeur-driven cabs.

Projects and initiatives undertaken by various sections of the Department

Project/Scheme/ Initiative Title	Description of Project/Scheme/Initiative
Maria Regina College, Naxxar Primary	General embellishment works.
Maria Regina College, St Venera Boys' Junior Lyceum	Plastering and painting of 10 classrooms and corridors, together with other embellishment works.
St Clare College, Gzira Primary	Embellishment of the whole school, including the restoration of the large damp wall in main corridor that has been an eyesore for a number of years.
St Clare College Boys' Secondary, Gzira	Plastering and painting of corridors and new toilets for Staff, and other embellishment works.
St Ġorġ Preca College, Hamrun Primary (SS)	Structural works on toilets declared unusable due to structural problems to make them usable again. Plastering and painting of corridors and classrooms.
St Ġorġ Preca College, Paola Primary A and B	Structural analysis on the plinth surrounding the school, together with structural intervention.
St Ġorġ Preca College, Boys' JL, Hamrun	General refurbishing of the whole school including all plastering and painting of corridors and classes, including Health and Safety issues.
St Ġorġ Preca College, Boys' Secondary, Marsa	General refurbishing of whole school, including yards, classes, opening windows, doors and other structural works.
St Ġorġ Preca College, Girls' Sec, M'Assumpta, Hamrun	Various embellishment and security works in the area.
St Ignatius College, Luqa Primary	General refurbishing of toilets, including interventions on the drainage system, and general embellishment works.
St Ignatius College, Qormi Primary San Ġorġ	New doors and plastering and painting of most of the school.
St Ignatius College, Boys' Secondary, Żebbuġ	General refurbishing works in foyer, classes, especially in restoration of the damp wall that has been an eyesore for decades.

St Ignatius College, Girls' Junior Lyceum, Blata l-Bajda	Various structural interventions especially on the surrounding walls and internal works.
St Margaret College, Kalkara Primary	General refurbishing works in foyer, classes, toilets and resource rooms, structural repairs and upgrading of the surface run off system.
St Margaret College, Girls' Secondary, Cospicua Project	Embellishment works at first floor and practical block and internal yard, which included all the infrastructural services.
St Theresa College, Boys' Secondary, Birkirkara	General refurbishing of whole school.
St Thomas More College, Fgura Primary A and B	Embellishment works together with various structural interventions.
St Thomas More College, Boys' Junior Lyceum, Hamrun (ex Paola B.J.L)	Structural interventions on skeletal structures and various embellishment works
Wardija Special School	Various structural interventions and embellishment works.
Palm Project	An intensified programme of spraying with systemic treatment was carried out on all palm trees on school grounds to protect against the Red Palm Weevil. Removal of the dead palm trees in various localities was also carried out.
Flower Arrangements	Provided approximately 380 flower arrangements for schools and directorates' ceremonies.
Asbestos Tanks	On a School Resources Management Department initiative re eliminating of asbestos water tanks from our school roofs, 31 tanks were removed from 10 state schools.
Computer Infrastructure	Extension of network in 11 kindergarten centres and 3 secondary schools.
First Aid in Schools (FAIS)	Leonardo Project for teacher training in First Aid.
Tandems GO	Grundtvig Project re Health and Safety development over the years.

School Requisites

The Imprest Funds Guidelines was revised and updated in the form of a manual to help Heads of School draw up the capital expenditure business plan and to abide by legal notices in the overall expenditures. The revision of this booklet arose in response to a number of concerns raised by Heads of School in their interpretations of guidelines in the previous edition. Slight modifications were introduced to take into account minor changes that were meant to keep in focus official government policy regarding Green Initiatives. A memo in this regard was sent to schools by the Ministry Green Leader through the School Resources Management Department. It was intended to encourage Heads of school to utilise a percentage of the Capital Funds allotted to schools to address this issue. This suggestion was supplemented by lists of websites that provided teaching material that could be used by class teachers during lesson delivery in a wide range of subjects. Data collected from the vast majority of schools has shown that the initiatives undertaken were very wide ranging. Some even succeeded in reducing the recurrent expenditure besides going greener.

Technical Services Branch

The Technical Services Branch, in collaboration with the Foundation for Tomorrow's Schools, is responsible for both major and minor everyday tasks that ensure that problems met with in schools are sorted out. The Department is guided by the principle that schools need to be a second home for the students and the teachers.

The table below gives a summary of the tasks that have been carried out by the nine trades, together with the drivers, that are incorporated within the Technical Services Branch:

Trade	Members of staff in the trade	Requisitions for works submitted in 2008	Number of jobs carried out in 2008	Number of jobs in hand
Aluminium works	2	87	78	9
Carpentry works	12	49	35	14
Drainage works	5	123	114	9
Drivers	5	254	254	Nil
Electrical works	18	140	127	13
Masonry works	11	41	36	5
Membrane works	2	72	63	9
Plastering and Painting works	19	145	131	14
Plumbing works	14	41	37	4
Welding and Iron works	11	43	40	3

ICT in Education

The new ICT in Education Service Manager was appointed in March 2009 and the “services” section of the eLearning Centre started operating under the Department of School Resources Management. The curricular part of the eLearning Centre continued to operate under the Department of Curriculum Management and eLearning.

The EMBED exhibition was held in April and was a team effort between the DQSE and the DES staff based at the eLearning Centre. During this exhibition, new technologies were introduced and exhibited. Workshops were held to give hands-on experience to the students and teachers who visited this Expo.

The Directorates of Education have embarked on a network extension programme in the kindergarten classes of the state primary schools. The first phase was directed at 11 Primary schools across Malta. This upgrade has offered unprecedented Internet access to circa 1,670 students and their teachers in Kindergarten classes. In coordination with the Foundation of Tomorrow’s Schools, two tenders were issued to identify network service providers to carry out the Local Area Network works needed in these 11 Primary state schools. Plans for more tenders are under way to extend the network in other schools to offer Internet access to the remaining Kinder classes. Holistically, the project will see an overhaul of the Local Area Network of all primary and secondary state schools over the coming three years to increase bandwidth provision and access to broadband hungry education applications.

Infrastructural work was also carried out in the classrooms of three secondary schools. These included St Nicholas College Girls’ Secondary School at Rabat, St Benedict’s College Boys’ Secondary School at Kirkop, and St Gorg Preca College Hamrun Boys’ Junior Lyceum. These works were carried out through the joint effort of the Technical Services electricians and the eLearning Centre network team.

Prior to the opening of the new academic year, the staff at the eLearning centre visited all the schools in Malta and Gozo, checked that all desktops were in order and switched them on for a number of days. Through this process, it was ensured that all desktops had their software updated prior to the beginning of the academic year.

The eLearning Centre provided new printers to the new kinder classes. Some other printers were provided to schools in an effort to help them replace the ones that were beyond economical repair.

In an effort to curb financial burdens on the Directorate, the Department invested in a plotter and in network testing equipment so that project management and testing is carried out internally by members of our staff. On a similar note, when transfers of laptops and desktops were necessary, the staff at the eLearning Centre carried out the reimaging and renaming of the leased equipment that was being used in schools.

The teacher turnover at the beginning of the academic year brought with it a corresponding number of laptop transfers. There were also a number of desktop movements. The whole process was completed during the first weeks after the opening of the school year.

The eLearning Centre provided Educational Modular Robot Assembly Kits and Speakers for all the secondary schools. Software for special needs was also purchased. Research was carried out on new digital gadgets like the Nintendo Wii (a Nintendo Wii console was given to every college), Nintendo DSi's and Digital Video Cameras in the education sector.

Members of staff completed a course in Adobe Indesign so that setting and publishing of material for the eLearning Centre and support could be given to the Directorates. Training was also offered to members of SMT, secretaries and Education Officers on how to keep up-to-date the website/blogs of their schools or subject. The eLearning Centre staff, in conjunction with the University of Malta, taught a group of B.Ed Home Economics students the use of interactive whiteboards. Training on the use of interactive whiteboards was also provided to a group of kindergarten trainees in coordination with MCAST.

Health and Safety in Schools

Enhanced awareness regarding health and safety has been achieved in all state and non-state (church and independent) schools, due to the unrelenting efforts of the Health and Safety Unit made up of peripatetic H&S teachers in primary schools and resident H&S teachers in secondary schools. Schools (and sometimes even non-educational entities) are increasingly asking for the services offered by this Unit's personnel and are therefore identifying the H&S Unit as a point of reference.

Teaching

The peripatetic teachers of the H&S Unit in Malta are divided into four (two-man) teaching teams:

- one team caters for St Margaret College, St Benedict College and St Thomas More College;
- the second team caters for San Ġorġ Preca College, St Ignatius College and St Clare's College;
- the third team services Maria Regina College, St Nicholas College and Saint Theresa College;
- the fourth team caters for the five special schools and for any other entity in which children go to learn but is not a regular school namely: the Drama Unit, HE Centre, Science Centre, School of Music, Unit Għożza, Special Inclusive Education Unit, St Patrick's Craft Centre and the Youth Hostel at M'Xlokk;
- Gozo has its own team which services all 11 primary schools in Gozo. There are another six resident H&S teachers who see to the three secondary schools, namely two each in Ninu Cremona Boys' Secondary School, Agius de Soldanis Girls' Secondary School and M A Refalo Higher Secondary, all in Victoria.
- Moreover, the Gozo College and Maria Regina College were involved in the *Catch-'em-Young* project wherein the very young students (Years 1, 2 and 3) are taught all about H&S principles without the use of formal lessons. This is done through games, role plays, puzzles and other such interactive pedagogies. It is hoped that the project will be extended to all colleges during 2010-2011.

During scholastic year ending July 2009, H&S teachers in the primary level delivered lessons to all Year 4, Year 5 and Year 6 classes in Malta and Gozo as follows:

	Year 4	Year 5 *	Year 6 *
1 st Term	Road Safety (Crossing the road, pelican /traffic lights, etc)	🌱 Bike Safety (Day and/or Night cycling, PPE)	🌱 Internet Safety (Porno sites, chatting, etc)
2 nd Term	🌱 Safety in the Home (Fires, electricity, hot liquids)	🌱 Drugs and needles 🌱 Stranger/Danger	🌱 Healthy eating Lifestyles
3 rd Term	🌱 Safety at sea (Swimming, Boats, Paddle boats, etc)	Home Safety (Chemicals, Poisoning, Medicines, Choking)	🌱 Thinking critically (Spotting and eliminating hazards)

* Both Years 5 and 6 are reminded of sea safety in the third session.

Moreover, at the beginning of the 2009-2010 scholastic year, the peripatetic teachers of the Unit visited all state and non-state schools and addressed the children (and staff) on AH1N1.

Other services

During scholastic year ending July 2009, the Health and Safety Unit serviced all state primary schools. Various topics related to Health and Safety were promoted and discussed with the school management teams and staff.

During 2009, the Health and Safety Unit contributed also towards the following:

- carried out annual risk assessments in all state primary and secondary schools;
- created and organised the Education H&S Certificate of Merit (HaSSCoM) which was applied for by 18 schools at elementary level and 12 schools at intermediate level;
- organised the Health and Safety Education Best-practice Award (HASEBA);
- distributed a monthly Health and Safety e-pamphlet to all schools on various topics related to H&S;
- organised courses for non academic school leavers in basic health and safety issues, basic fire awareness and prevention, and basic first aid; delivered talks to parents on local and EU legislation related to Health and Safety issues;
- organised annual Health and Safety Expositions in Gozo; the Malta event has been moved to 2010;
- participated and organised staff development sessions in various schools on health and safety issues;
- prepared detailed evacuation plans for schools, including the installation of marked plans and exit signage at strategic places on school premises;
- organised two Inset Courses, namely: “Introduction to H&S” and “Basic First Aid”; provided support to Skolasajf 2009 to ensure a healthy and safe environment;
- trained academic and minor school staff in fire awareness and suppression, as well as in basic first aid;
- coordinated the activities of the Health and Safety monitoring team for the premises of the Education Headquarters in Floriana; trained, observed and advised schools on evacuation protocols and drills;
- prepared school contingency plans; inspected first aid cabinets to ensure that they were well stocked and their contents compliant with the recommendations set in government-recognised first aid courses;
- ensured that fire extinguishers were appropriate in number, well-maintained and serviced;
- advised on the procurement, deployment and fixing of emergency lighting, as and where necessary;
- liaised with local and foreign agencies such as the OHSa; CPD; Malta Red Cross; FTS; ADT; AFM; AKS; HIS; PPCD at OPM; Sedqa; Appoġġ; Police Department; Health Division; EUPA; RoSPA; Child Accident Prevention Trust (CAPT); European Child Safety Alliance (ECSA);
- provided a consultancy service to all schools, including non-state schools and other sections of the Education Directorates;
- regularly conducted research in schools. During 2009, extensive research on sports days, fire drills and accidents in schools was carried out;
- organised and/or participated in EU-funded projects related to Health and Safety; participated actively in various inter-departmental and ministerial committees;
- promoted Child Safety Education on the Mass Media; were involved in two European projects namely *Tandems Go*, a Polish led Grundtvig2 project, and *First Aid In Schools – FAIS*, a Leonardo da Vinci project coordinated with Red Cross (Gozo), Red Cross (Belgium), Red Cross (Italy), and Red Cross (Germany);
- acted as member on the steering committee of the ECSA and the local coordinator for the Child Safety Action Plan;
- started the compilation of a list of the private and government entities following a health and safety policy. Schools may consult this list when they organise educational visits.

PAUL S ATTARD

Director (School Resources Management Department)

STUDENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Professional Staff

The Department's management staff consists of the Director and four Service Managers, who manage the following sections:

- Educational Psycho-Social Services
- Special Education and Resource Centres
- Inclusive Education
- Projects and Initiatives

Student Services Department Centre, Hamrun

In 2009 the Director for Student Services continued to refurbish and embellish the centre for Student Services in Hamrun. This included a total overhaul of the first floor of this centre which now hosts most of the services provided by this department.

EDUCATIONAL PSYCHO-SOCIAL SERVICES

The Educational Psycho-Social Services within the Department for Student Services seeks to provide quality service by qualified personnel to clients within the educational system according to the specific needs of students. These Services are intended to assist students in their holistic development as individuals and help them become active and responsible members of society.

The Educational Psycho-Social Services Section is comprised of the following Units/Services:

- Education Medical Service
- School Psychological Service
- School Social Work Service
- Guidance and Counselling Services
- Unit Ghozza
- Safe Schools Programme which incorporates the Child Safety Services, Anti-Bullying Unit and Substance-Abuse

During 2009, the Educational Psycho-Social Services were transferred to the building of the Student Services Department in Hamrun. In this way, the work can be carried out in a more coordinated way, and the persons concerned in different sectors are working together in order to discuss the cases in a more efficient manner and better time consumption.

Counsellors, psychotherapists, psychologists and guidance teachers who work in specialised sectors were, for the first time, given personal professional supervision sessions from two professionals in the respective areas. During the year, 10 trainee career advisors, 10 trainee counsellors, three psychotherapists and 10 trainee educational psychologists started working with the department.

The section is also taking part in a project on a European level, the European Lifelong Guidance programme Network (ELGPN). The reason for the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network is for the exchange of information, knowledge and practice in the Lifelong Guidance Policy Network sector, in the European context. The Educational Psycho-Social Services Section is contributing in Work Package 1. The participants within this group, of which Malta forms part, evaluate European Policies on Career Management Skills.

Education Medical Services

Administration of regular medication at schools.

In 2009, most of the efforts were directed towards the setting up of a policy and procedure for administration of medicines in schools by MMDNA nurses. The setting up of this new service involved the provision to all students who need to take medication on a regular basis during school hours. This is especially for chronic conditions. Services of MMDNA qualified staff provide such administration of medicines according to prescription of their physician. The EMS unit was involved in a survey to quantify the services needed with this regard and calculated approximate costs for the provision of such a service which lead to the signing of a contract of services between the Directorate for Student Services and MMDNA representatives.

Head lice Screening Programme

The head lice screening programme was carried out to meet the demands of individual school administrators. In certain schools (including private and church schools) where there was reporting about head lice infestations, screening was seen to without delay. The service was also provided uninterruptedly during the summer months during which 45 Skolasajf centres were visited and their pupils screened on at least three separate occasions. Since the beginning of the 2009-2010 scholastic year, there have been 55 requests by Heads of School for screening, covering schools ranging from primary schools to secondary schools in government, church and private schools. A total of 34,095 boys and 34,230 girls were screened during the year.

Advisory Service

Advisory service, by phone and if need be through visits to specific educational institutions, constitute a major service continuously sought after by school administrators and college level administration, as well as directors in main directorates of the Education Ministry and by parents, when medical issues arise. The problems are diverse and range from queries about the contagion of certain conditions to management of particular circumstances with health connotations. Advice is also provided to the relevant sections of the Directorate to implement and execute directives on sick leave issued in OPM Circular 12/99 according to information forwarded by respective specialists in medical reports. Advisory services are also given to schools about arrangements to meet the particular needs of children with special needs. This is done through participation in and organisation of multidisciplinary teams to devise an individual education needs programme embracing the diverse aspects of the conditions tackled. The unit also prepares and updates an informative publication regarding medical conditions reported to the Statementing Board. The publication provides reference of websites from which further information can be sought. This is also important to allow a process of classification of these conditions according to European standards which serve the administration to utilise when liaising with EU institutions.

Special Exam Arrangements Applications

Special exam arrangements assessments are carried out in the school attended by the child involved and the necessary arrangements are carried out after careful assessment. This involves analysing the submitted medical certification and reports so that recommendations are then passed to curriculum management for implementation

Hepatitis Immunisation Programme

The Hepatitis B Vaccination programme of special schools staff, due to the particular exposure to body fluids which arises from the nature of their working conditions, is organised by the unit and an updated electronic database has been completed. This service relies heavily on the liaison with the Health Division. The EMS unit purchases Hep vaccines and immunity tests from the Health Division and the necessary

authorisations are issued to eligible special school staff members to be offered Hep B vaccination and testing at Floriana Immunisation Centre.

Fever Unit

The unit organised and provided a medical service of clinical assistance in the case of children who, during their Junior Lyceum Entrance Exam, were sick or needed special medical attention due to the conditions they were suffering from and which still allowed them to attend for the exam.

Health Promoting School Inspections Programme

Health Promoting School Inspections were also carried out and the necessary advice about school clinics and first-aid set-ups as well as health issues about particular students are being tackled. Nutritional aspects as well as tuck-shops and food availability are also considered and the school administration is advised accordingly.

BMI survey in secondary schools

This was a major project that made up part of the HELP initiative and which involved the distribution of weighing scales of high standards to all secondary schools in Malta and Gozo. The weighing scales were calibrated and a cross-sectional study set up to research predictors of overweight problems and obesity in secondary school children. This was achieved with the help of PE teachers and coordinated by the Education Medical Services. All the procedures were carried out after extensive consultation with the Data Protection Commissioner. Strict anonymity was respected during data processing as well as all safeguards taken to ensure the safety of the children. The response was good and the number of eligible students attending Form I was 4,951. This figure does not include a small number of 12-year-old students who failed to pass the secondary school entrance exam and repeated the final year at primary school level. This figure also includes a few students who failed to be promoted to Form II and repeated Form I. The actual measurements, questionnaire-delivery and collection have been carried out. This phase was planned to pave the way forward to develop a continuous surveillance of BMI in all secondary schools for all the students and development of a longitudinal dimension to the project. A similar process already exists in several countries and EMS strives to achieve this.

The above-mentioned study about the prevalence and risk factors of overweight and obesity amongst eleven year old secondary school children which served as a start point for a BMI surveillance programme in secondary schools according to the HELP initiative was concluded during this year.

Results

There is a 36.2% prevalence of overweight and obesity using the IOTF sex and age Specific cut-off points.

A significant level of association through simple Chi-Square testing was found between OO and mother's age at delivery less than 23.66 years at 0.034 level of significance, a high birth weight at 0.001, non affiliation to clubs related to physical activity at 0.005, region of residence 3, 2 and 4 at 0.006, low maternal education at 0.001, low paternal education at 0.0005, low maternal occupation at 0.023, low paternal occupation at 0.0005, limited breastfeeding at 0.003, first born status at 0.034, high paternal BMI at 0.0005, high maternal BMI at 0.005 and menarche status at 0.0005 level of significance.

Through binary logistic regression performed to identify variables suitable to predict probability of developing overweight and obesity; in descending order; Father's education limited to obligatory schooling was positively correlated OR 3.526 (95%CI 1.34-9.26). Region of residence 3, 2 and 4 being positively correlated region 3 South Eastern with OR 3.029 (CI 1.45-6.33). Menarche status was positively correlated OR 2.819 (95% CI 2.05-3.88). Father's BMI in overweight category showed positive predictive correlation OR 2.183 (95% CI 1.55-3.08) high birth weight category 3 from 3.275 kg to 3.814 kg was

positively correlated OR 1.869 (95% CI 1.62-3.005). Mother's BMI in overweight category showed a positive predictive correlation with OR 2.02 (CI 1.49-2.74). Those consuming less than three ready-made meals weekly showed a negative correlation OR 0.697 (95%CI 0.52- 0.94). Those in category born before 37 weeks showed a negative predictive correlation with OR 0.646 (CI 0.46-1.03).

Liaison with Health Division

This process has taken a formal nature with the setting up of an interdepartmental committee providing a forum in which issues regarding Health and Education are discussed and liaison sought. The Education Medical Services Unit is one of the main stakeholders in this process, involving frequent meetings which are usually lengthy and technical requiring relevant research and preparation according to the issues on the agenda. The Unit also represents the Directorate for Educational Services on the inter-departmental committee to tackle the obesity problem in Malta. Liaison has also been developed in a structured manner with the Disease Surveillance Unit and the Health Promotion Unit in areas which involve contagious diseases in school children and execution of related policies as well as health-promoting initiatives which the unit deems necessary.

This committee, which the Directorate of Educational Services and Health Division have developed in an effort to coordinate activities related to health in schools and educational institutions, has met regularly every month and several projects and initiatives were coordinated between the two authorities. A School Health Conference was also organised by the Health promotion unit in which the head of EMS gave his contribution.

Educational Talks and Presentations

Talks and presentations are regularly organised even on radio and TV and are directed towards staff development, education of parents and students and as educational initiatives for nursing staff giving services in the school set-up.

Heavy School Bags Initiatives

The unit was instrumental in the development of a committee in the Education Student Services Directorate to address the heavy school bags issue. The unit was also responsible to weigh all the text books used and this paved the way to the implementation of a policy updated by the committee to help schools develop timetable-based control of school bag weight. The whole process involved several meetings held during the summer months and extensive consultation with several units in the Education Directorates. This triggered a campaign and policy review which was issued by the Education Ministry and the Directorate of Student Services.

HELP committee

The EMS is a major stakeholder in the HELP committee and worked on several initiatives including an auditing educational exercise in the form of a food frequency questionnaire lead by school student councils which should result in an audit exercise of which food items students consume during school hours as well as an educational initiative regarding healthy eating habits for students.

SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICE

In September 2009, the Directorate for Educational Services employed 10 trainee educational psychologists. The main services offered by the School Psychological Service during 2009 included:

- Psycho-educational assessment and intervention for children and young people with learning and behavioural difficulties. The majority of referrals requested support relating to severe emotional and/or behavioural difficulties (including aggression, depression, suicidal behaviour, disruption, and school refusal) and identification of learning difficulties predominantly relating to dyslexia, dyspraxia, mental

disability, ADD/ADHD and autism. Around 50 % of new referrals requested an assessment vis-à-vis special examination arrangements for Junior Lyceum or MATSEC examinations;

- Telephone consultation with parents, school staff and professionals in other agencies/services;
- Attendance for case conferences in schools and in child support agencies/services;
- Advising teachers and parents on the psycho-educational needs of children;
- Liaising with other units within the Support Services of the Education Division and with external child-support agencies;
- Participation in whole-school development, relating to children's psycho-educational development and/or special educational needs;
- Contributions to professional development of school staff;
- Contributions to policy review regarding special examination arrangements for candidates with particular requirements;
- Supervision of trainee psychologists and psychology students;
- Induction course for trainee educational psychologists.

Referrals

In 2009, 482 new referrals were received by the Service, consisting of 241 individual case referrals; 149 Junior Lyceum special examination arrangements assessments for the May 2009 examinations; and 92 MATSEC special examination arrangements assessments for the May 2010 examinations.

As of 31 December 2009, the total number of closed referrals (received before or during 2009) was 303; 431 referrals (received before or during 2009) remained on the waiting list.

School Social Work Service

The School Social Work Service ensures that all school age children receive the best possible education, in the best possible conditions and to the best of their abilities. This is done through the use of effective social work intervention and, when necessary, by taking uncooperative parents to court.

Work Activities

During 2009, the tasks performed by the School Social Work Service were as follows:

Home visits	118	Talks to school staff	4
School visits	113	Talks on radio	1
Education court sittings	105	Meetings with University students	15
Case conference	21	Meetings with other Professionals	68
Case reviews	25	School Reports on absenteeism – cases assessed	8,428*
Juvenile court sittings	7	School Reports on absenteeism – cases taken to court	3,336
Juvenile court cases	120		
Social work intervention at Unit	137		
Exemptions processed by Social Workers	1,212		

*The school absentee reports for December are still being received and are not included.

Initiatives

During last summer, the section embarked on a project aimed at addressing primary school aged children who were habitually absent from school. All the lists of school absentee reports sent by the schools during the previous scholastic year were checked and it was found that 82 primary school aged children fell in this category. During the summer months, therefore, the social workers home visited these families and worked with those needing special attention. Up till a few weeks ago, when the social workers checked on these pupils' attendance, it was found that 22 had been attending school regularly. It is hoped that with the recruitment of new social workers, and after an in-depth induction course, the school social work service will return to its best functioning.

Guidance and Counselling Service

This Unit sought to provide a continuous service to all students, leading to their holistic development. The service was given to schools and to the general public during office hours. The Guidance and Counselling Unit covers:

- personal, curricular and career guidance with students and parents;
- developmental guidance based on identifying and meeting the personal and social needs of pupils/students and helping them deal successfully with their concerns;
- meetings and training for Guidance Teachers and Counsellors;
- work and contacts with other agencies;
- seminars and ongoing development programmes regarding work of other agencies and personal growth/enrichment;
- parenting skills programmes, consisting of six sessions with parents;
- individual and group counselling with students and parents, both as preventive action and crises intervention.

Employment of new Recruits

In September, 10 trainee counsellors, 10 trainee career advisors and 10 trainee educational psychologists were employed with the Department of Student Services. An induction course was given to the trainee career advisors, the trainee counsellors and the trainee educational psychologists by different professionals. The trainee counsellors will be working in the respective colleges as from January 2010.

Counselling Service

This service is given in all schools. Students usually ask for counselling themselves and are referred by teachers or by the parents. In some cases parents may be sent for. Counselling could range from crisis interventions to personal, vocational or educational counselling. There are also a great number of referrals made to other helping and support agencies.

Curricular Guidance

- Transition from primary into secondary schools. Choice of subjects at secondary level is also covered. Visits from the primary schools to the secondary/junior lyceum within the same college are organised.
- Subject options for Form 2, talks, discussions, meetings with students and parents - Individual counselling.
- Entry into post-secondary courses. Talks to 5th Formers on various courses available, visits to different post-secondary institutions, individual and group counselling. This exercise is a year-long process.
- Teachers in postsecondary institutions visit the "feeder" secondary schools (Form V students) and brief them regarding course content, subject choices, etc. Some institutes also accept visits from secondary schools. When students start post secondary education, the Guidance staff meets with students and helps in their settling in.

Meetings

- *Counsellors*: These were held every fortnight with the agenda being made up of issues that needed to be discussed. Occasionally a guest speaker would address the counsellors on a specific issue.
- *Guidance Teachers*: National Guidance meetings were held monthly, as part of an ongoing development programme. Topics covered included: Student Advisory Services – the University of Malta, Occupational Therapy, Employment Services and Schemes for School Leavers, The Importance of Mobility for Young People - EURES in Malta, ETC Services to Youth in Disadvantaged Situations, Disability; perceptions and misconceptions and others.

Counsellors continuous professional development

In 2009, for the first time, counsellors were provided with personal and group professional supervision as part of their ongoing development. The counsellors attended a short course on Group Supervision. They also attended the training week organised by the MACP. The training, personal and group professional supervision proved to be very beneficial and enriching.

Courses

For the first time, three courses were offered to Guidance Teachers and Counsellors, one on Career Skills and the other two on Helping Skills that started in October 2008 ended on 21 January 2009. The second course re helping skills started in February and ended in May 2009.

Summer Service

A summer walk-in service was offered to school leavers and post secondary students who were in need of a guidance service upon receiving their SEC or Matric results. Post-secondary schools such as the Junior College, Higher Secondary, ITS, MCAST and University asked for help in guiding prospective students to enter one of the courses. This took place from 20 July to 5 August. During this period, eight guidance teachers offered their services, on four mornings a week during the open days for applications. Once all closing dates were exceeded, the service came to an end. This service was very much in demand as many students who turned up had results that they were not expecting and others decided to enrol in a different course.

Parenting Skills Programme

Sessions were held throughout the year and delivered by trained facilitators for groups of not more than 20 parents. Requests were forwarded to the Unit, especially by the primary schools. A six-session parenting programme called *Nifhmu 'l Uliedna* was carried out. Topics included self-esteem, decision-making, communication, relationships, drug abuse, assertiveness, health and sexuality.

Personal Growth

One-day seminars were organised by the Guidance sections of several schools. Counsellors identified particular needs which were then dealt with during the seminars. Issues tackled centred round leadership, relationships, communication and other relevant topics.

Request for Service

The Unit's services are also requested by primary and secondary schools, and parish groups for seminars/talks and staff development programmes. Counsellors also liaise with other entities and services like Sedqa, Appoġġ, Anti-Bullying, Anti-Substance, Child Safety Services for talks/discussions/seminars in schools and for preventive programmes for Prefects Programme.

Comenius Project

A small number of Danish teachers came over to Malta, between 21 and 28 March, in order to see how the Guidance Unit in Malta functions. Four counsellors took them to St Margaret's College on a Job-Shadowing Project and also to institutes such as MCAST, STC and ETC.

From October to December the premises at Floriana were closed and the counsellors are now based in the respective colleges. The counsellors meet regularly either to discuss various issues or for professional development sessions. The services above are now being organised at college level.

Career Guidance

- *Careers' Orientation Visits:* Places visited were Bank of Valletta, Institute of Tourism Studies, Central Bank, Malta Stock Exchange, Middle Sea Insurance, AFM, Swatar Training Centre, and Malta Centre for Restoration, University of Malta and Malta Institute for Computer Science. These visits were held mainly for Form V students. In some cases, some fourth formers were also included in the groups.
- Apart from these visits, every school organised talks and visits on the initiative of guidance teachers. Careers' Market or Careers' Week were also organised in a good number of schools.
- As of the new scholastic year, namely September to December 2009, a new approach was adopted in terms of Career Orientation Visits for students. While on the one hand Form IV students visited entities linked to the world of work namely Central Bank of Malta, Malta Stock Exchange, Middle Sea Insurance, AFM, Malta Centre for Restoration, and MFSA, Form V students visited/attended talks post-secondary institutions namely Institute of Tourism Studies, Malta Institute for Computer Science, Swatar Training Centre, University of Malta, Giovanni Curmi Higher Secondary, and MCAST Open Week.
- *Career Guidance Initiatives:* Talks and visits were organised in all Colleges on the initiative of the School Counsellors and Guidance Teachers. Careers' Market, Careers' Weeks, Careers Fairs as well as Job Shadowing Experiences were also organised in a good number of Colleges. These were mainly organised for students of Form IV and V.
- *Pilot Job Shadowing Scheme in Conjunction with MFSA:* Between the end of June and mid-July, a total of 50 Business Studies and Computer Studies students (three from each State College and 20 from Church and Independent Schools) participated in a Pilot Job Shadowing Scheme carried out by the MFSA in conjunction with the Career Seminars Unit (which from Scholastic Year 2009/2010 has become the Career Guidance Unit) within the Student Services Department. This Scheme gave students the opportunity to observe first-hand various careers within the Financial Service Industry. At the end of this one-week long Pilot Project, the students were presented with a Certificate of Participation.
- *Career Seminars:* Between January and May, the section was responsible for the development and delivery of a one-day Careers Seminar for school leavers (fourth or fifth Formers). Two to three seminars were delivered per day. During 2009 a total of 3,967 students attended the seminar. These were classified as follows: Boys' State Schools (Secondary and Junior Lyceums) 1,200; Boys' Church/Private Schools 587; Girls' State Schools (including Unit Għozza) 1,500; Girls' Church/Private schools 680. All State Colleges were covered. The one-day seminar consisted of three sessions, focusing respectively on The Self; Job Market with the third session being divided into three parts treating the subjects of the Malta Qualifications Framework, job application writing and the Europass Curriculum Vitae as well as interview skills.
- *Career lessons:* As of September 2009, the Career Seminar was phased out and replaced by Career Lessons. The Career Lessons programme consists of four 90-minute lessons with all fourth formers in State Schools. The interactive lessons are supported by powerpoint presentations and a students workbook for students. The workbook includes written exercises, group work and group activities as well as role plays.

All fourth formers in State Colleges are benefitting from Career Lessons. A total of 270 lessons have been delivered between September and December. Career Guidance is offered in the School Guidance Rooms by the Career Guidance Teachers for students who request a personalised service after the Career Lessons.

National Careers Convention

The state, private and independent schools participated in this convention which took place between 1 and 4 April in the Mediterranean Conference Centre, Valletta. This convention provided information regarding career prospects and opportunities for school leavers, where they also met a good number of employers.

All the members of the Career Seminars Unit and some counsellors participated in the Convention, offering round-the-clock one-to-one Career Guidance in the stand of the Guidance and Counselling Services.

Continuous Professional Development

Between 23 November and 4 December, the five Career Guidance Teachers within the Career Guidance Unit attended a course in Occupational Testing Level A and B delivered by Reed Learning, Malta. This course was sponsored by the Directorate for Educational Services.

Three Career Guidance Teachers are currently reading for an Msc in Career Guidance through a scholarship of the Career Guidance Capacity Building Programme.

Tracer Study

Since 1990 the Guidance and Counselling Services have been organising a series of tracer studies - both at school and at national level. Such research provides helpful information to educational planners as well as the personnel at the Guidance & Counselling Services. The work carried out by Guidance Teachers encouraging students to have positive approaches toward furthering their education is evident in the steady increase there has been during the past few years in the number of students participating in post-secondary courses. The report indicates that 3,952 young people (80.5% of the total number of students who reached school leaving age and replied to the survey) opted to follow a course in post-secondary schools. This represents a 4 % increase over the previous year. All students who completed Form V in 2008 were asked to participate in this Tracer Study, i.e. all students who are legally able to leave school on finishing the statutory school career and could opt to stay on at school or seek work. Those students who left school before sitting for their school-leaving examination - having been officially exempted from school on reaching their sixteenth birthday - are considered as dropouts and thus are not included in the study. In the form sent to all school leavers, each student is asked to indicate if she/he was studying at school, working or at home. A list of all post-secondary schools is sent to all school leavers. Schools are grouped into academic, technical or vocational courses. Each student is asked to indicate which school he/she was attending at the time of the survey, i.e. October/November 2009. If the student declares he/she is working, a list of the 10 jobs which are most popular in the 2007 Tracer Study is given. Students are asked to indicate if they are working in these or other different jobs. Students also state whether they were at home, emigrated, registering for work or any other option.

UNIT GHOZZA

This Unit seeks to provide a support service and an educational programme to unmarried pregnant minors, leading them to adopt a positive attitude towards motherhood while empowering them to pursue their career paths.

For this purpose the Unit works closely with Heads of School, School Counsellors and Guidance Teachers. The Unit make contacts with the School Administration as well as the Matsec Board, to facilitate attendance for examination sittings.

When the pregnant girl is still attending school, after informing the Head of School, she may choose to follow one of the three options: to continue attending school regularly and go to the Unit for counselling or to seek information; stop attending school until the birth of the child and attend the full programme at Ghozza; or to attend 2/3 days at school and 2/3 days at Ghozza. After the birth of the child we do our utmost for the girl to return to school.

Referrals

From January to December, 164 new cases of unwed teenage mothers contacted the Unit. 47 girls attended the programme regularly; 75 girls came for counselling; 42 girls were contacted and given support over the telephone; attempts to contact another 19 girls were fruitless. Around 25 teenage mothers and their babies/toddlers attended regularly the Mother and Baby Support Group on Friday, and a few others attended sporadically.

Programmes

The Unit offers a number of programmes including:

- *Adolescent pregnancy*: The adolescent pregnancy programme uses a holistic approach that aims to empower the pregnant girl. This programme runs for three days a week and is essentially based on PSD sessions in self-development, pregnancy issues and parenting skills. Parent-craft sessions are also held by a midwife from Mater Dei to address further pregnancy issues. Craft sessions are also organised to enhance the girls' creative skills. In addition to this, the programme also emphasises the importance of education and employment, thus helping the unwed teenage mother to develop personal goals and the desire for a productive future. With this purpose in mind, guidance teachers from the Careers' section within the Educational Psycho-social Services are invited to provide input. Furthermore, a number of speakers from various agencies are invited to give talks pertaining to the physical and psychological well-being of the baby, as well as social benefits and registration of name.
- *Parents*: Parents are involved in the programme to gain further knowledge of how they can assist in their teen daughter's pregnancy, by providing a supportive and nurturing family life, supporting the teen in setting a realistic life agenda and encouraging the development of a hopeful sense of the future. This is often done through counselling, which is offered not only to the pregnant girl's parents but also to the parents of her partner. Parents are always invited to attend for the first time the girl comes to the unit; for the parentcraft/labour session held at Mater Dei; and for a special session delivered by personnel from the Public Registry and the Social Service.
- *Mother and Baby Support Group*: The Mother and Baby Group is held weekly every Friday. The programme for this group is designed to offer the teen mothers a supportive and nurturing environment, where they can learn about parenthood responsibility and their obligation to cherish and nurture their infant child. Issues relevant mainly to personal and social situations and parenting skills are tackled and carried out through discussions and inviting speakers to the Unit.
- *Craft sessions* are also held to enhance creativity, and outings to boost social communication and cohesion in the group. This also promotes communication between mother and child. A certificate is given to the girls who regularly attend the programme of the Unit.
- *Prevention*: Talks titled *Nifmhu 'l-Uliedna fil-Bidliet* to parents of children in Year 5, 6 and 7 are regularly carried out on Wednesdays as part of a prevention programme. From January until December 2009, these talks were held in 29 state schools and 16 in church and independent schools.
- *Counselling Service*: Counselling is offered at all times and by appointment. It is requested by the pregnant girls and their partners as well as their families. Counselling is also requested by the teen mothers. They continue to be considered as clients of the unit until they are married.
- *Research*: Opportunity for research is given when requested by students pursuing various university courses. Permission is always requested from the Education Division and standards requested by the Data Protection Act are strictly adhered to.
- *Initiatives*: As of September 2009, the Unit has all the more become aware of the necessity of emphasising the importance of education and employment in order to help this particular target group become more contributing adults. For this reason, contacts were made with ETC personnel as well as with the Career Guidance Teachers in order to devise a career orientation programme that aims to empower the young mothers. During this first term, two orientation visits were organised – a half-day seminar at ETC and an open day at MCAST.

Safe Schools Programmes

Substance Abuse Policy Team (SAPT)

The Substance Abuse Policy Team (SAPT) which forms part of the Safe Schools Programme strives to keep schools safe from all forms of illicit substance abuse. This stance warrants the planning and implementation of preventive strategies and interventions for students, school staff and parents.

- *Consultation services:* offering assistance to schools whenever cases of alleged substance abuse occur and providing technical advice on matters of policy and procedures regarding school referrals.
- *Intervention:* Assisting individuals who are allegedly abusing or are at risk of substance abuse. The process of intervention involves an array of indirect and/or direct strategies. Indirect interventions may include classroom sessions, fora, seminars, professional development meetings/in-service training and other preventive work. Direct strategies involve sessions with abusers, parents and staff concerned in the case. The total number of cases reported to SAPT in 2009 was 143

Reports Submitted to SAPT in 2009					
	State Secondary Schools		State Primary Schools	Church Schools	
	Boys	Girls		Boys	Girls
Total	63	51	4	17	8

- *Consultations:* Over the year, 43 referrals came through various professionals including parents, and social workers. These referrals were investigated through secondary prevention activities that included targeted educational plans and adolescent and family counselling/intervention and professional meetings.
- *Coordination and Monitoring:* Serving as a link between schools and service delivery units of Student Services in DES and/or agencies/professionals such as the Drug Squad and Sedqa, or when required with NGOs, including Caritas and Oasi in Gozo. All cases are monitored regularly by keeping frequent contact with the students and workers concerned.
- *Prevention:* Participating together with Sedqa and the PSD/Guidance Team in prevention programmes. Prevention is a crucial aspect of the service, with a two-fold aim - to focus on those students who are most at risk; and to be proactive in promoting a healthy society.

Activities are directed towards students, parents, staff and the community at large. The Family Strategies Programme (FSP) is set up to assist and support parents and carers in their ever-changing and challenging role, as first educators of their children. As part of our awareness programme, we have participated in some mass media programmes.

- *Dissemination of information:* During the year the Unit personnel was invited to participate in the induction course of new Assistant Heads in schools, nursing staff, and customer care unit within the DES. Also, meetings were held periodically with College administrators and guidance personnel.
- *Group Professional Supervision:* For the first time the personnel had group professional supervision.

Anti-Bullying Unit

The functions of the Unit are:

- *Consultation services:* provision of advice, understanding and support in developing whole-school responses to bullying and promotion of pro-social behaviour; provision of support to individuals, (staffs, students, parents) to increase their confidence and competence in dealing with incidences of bullying behaviour; and provision of useful resources.
- *Intervention:* whole-school policy development including raising awareness of the issue of bullying; and formulating and implementing strategies to respond to situations of bullying behaviour. Whole-school interventions to include: staff/school development; class interventions; individual cases; and parents' meetings.

- *Prevention*: provision of a range of activities to maintain a steady input regarding the prevention of bullying in schools by raising awareness of administration, staff, minor staff, students and parents to the long term effects of bullying.
- *Coordination and monitoring*: liaison with schools and other student services or professional agencies within or outside the Directorate for Educational Services.
- *Prevention intervention*: With prevention interventions being a central aim of the programme, new initiatives continued to be developed. The follow up from the previous year continued. Prevention strategies through tailor-made programmes were developed with the school on demand to meet their individual needs.
- *Activities*:
 - Interventions from all schools including church schools and independent schools.
 - Regular visits were made to Gozo.
 - Participation in anti-bullying weeks in different schools.
 - There was a significant increase in the number of secondary schools (state, church, and independent) asking for awareness and intervention sessions.
 - Primary schools targeted input to all classes and their parents.
 - The Unit was invited to participate in a number of school and staff development meetings.
 - The Unit took part in various television and radio programmes.
- *Referrals and intervention*: Referrals were made by School Administration, Educational Welfare Services, School Psychologists, Guidance and Counselling Unit, social workers from Appogg, 179 and directly from parents and students. The number of individual referrals amounted to 282 cases. The number of follow-up visits has decreased owing to the increase in volume of work and lack of staff. Constant contact is kept by telephone with parents or school as the need occurs. All ten state colleges as well as independent and church schools were visited during 2009 for the following purposes: staff development, parents' meetings, individual cases and class contact. Interventions made included raising awareness of the issue of bullying and formulating and implementing strategies to respond to situations of bullying behaviour.
- *Research and Training*: More coordination with higher institutes of learning for research projects is felt to be imperative for the optimal functioning of the programmes. Data collection is taking place, as this will offer scope for study in the future. An evaluation tool to assess and measure effectiveness of interventions is another area for study.

Child Safety Services (CSS)

Child Safety Services (CSS) is a specialised unit working in the area of child abuse. It is an educational, coordinating and therapeutic unit, offering intervention and preventive services to students, parents and school staff. CSS strives to offer effective and professional services catering for the needs of children who have experienced abuse.

Child Safety Services has the following functions:

- *Prevention*: Prevention work is a continuous process in schools. This includes awareness-raising sessions with parents and prevention sessions with students. Prevention programmes are offered mainly to Year 4 students at the primary level and to first/second/third/fourth formers attending State, Church or Independent schools. The programmes aim at equipping students with the necessary knowledge about child abuse and vital skills necessary to protect oneself.
- *Consultation*: Consultation with various schools has been a main priority for CSS since its onset. Normally, school staff or other professionals within the Directorate for Educational Services call CSS for consultation. Consultations are made mainly over the phone or within the school and with the members of staff concerned. The aim of these consultations is to decide whether the school needs to refer the case for investigation or whether the case needs to be observed further by the school before being referred. In the case of the latter, CSS together with the school, design an observation programme

and time frame. Consultations have also been requested by parents, other professionals working within the student services and other outside agencies.

- *Monitoring of cases and coordination of services:* Once a referral is received, Child Safety Services monitor the case and coordinate any work that needs to be done by other student services and/or other agencies. In most cases, a team of professionals from different agencies are involved with the case. CSS offers to be a link between schools and service delivery units of the Student Services Department and/or other agencies/professionals outside the Directorate of Educational Services.
- *Training:* This function has been given high priority. CSS participates in staff development meetings in schools, upon request. Generally, the Unit presents the four forms of child abuse; physical, neglect, emotional and sexual. The Unit then outlines the main points of the National Policy for child protection, especially what a member of staff should do when a case of child abuse arises. Other training programmes delivered by CSS staff during the year included:
 - a 3-day INSET course on Child Abuse was organised by CSS, highlighting awareness, prevention and intervention for members of staff in the School Sector.
 - a three-day training programme with the Trainee Counsellors.
 - a one-day programme to the Career Advisors as part of their training.
 - a training session to the staff at the customer care section.
 - a member of staff delivered two sessions with the Learning Support Assistants as part of their training.
 - a member of staff was asked to address the Heads of non-state schools in order to sensitise them further to the seriousness of abuse, and to indicate what steps are to be taken in cases where there is a strong suspicion, disclosure or other evidence of abuse, according to the Child Protection Policy.
- *Counselling/ Intervention:* Once the case has been investigated, counselling to survivors of child abuse is offered. The counselling sessions take place with the child within the school premises. Often other services offered to students are also coordinated.
- *Research:* In 2009 CSS carried out the following research:
 - development of a bounded pack of notes to be used by Heads of School as a guide when they come to refer cases, with related additional information which can prove useful when faced with cases of abuse;
 - drafting of an extensive programme for Trainee Counsellors as part of their training and a similar programme for Career Advisors.
- *Tracing:* CSS are often asked by Appoġġ to trace students in schools so that they can investigate or follow up cases of child abuse. This task involves phoning schools until a school confirms that the student is registered there. As in the previous year, this task was facilitated by help received through the SIS who helped in identifying the state school attended by the children concerned. When a child cannot be found, the Unit then contacts all the church and independent schools to confirm whether the student is listed in one of their schools. This year was marked with an increase in tracing demands by the Child Protection Services, the Initial Response Team and by the Generic Section at Appoġġ. In all, this year there were 409 requests for tracing,
- *Special Educational Needs Team (SENT):* CSS has continued to be part of the Special Educational Needs Team, being present on five SENT teams. These were present at Żabbar Primary A and B, Senglea, Cospicua, St Julian's and Sliema Primary Schools. SENT consists of a multidisciplinary team that caters for children with learning problems, trying to identify and help students at risk.
- *Media Awareness:* This past year we were invited to one television morning programme where CSS was requested to talk about Child Abuse and Child Safety Services.
- *Continued Professional Development in 2009:* Four members of staff attended a training week organised by MACP (Malta Association for the Counselling Profession). Three members are currently reading a Masters Degree in Counselling at the University of Malta. Three members of staff attended in-service training. A member of staff attended a Mental Illness Seminar. For the first time, the personnel had Personal Professional Supervision.
- *Others:* Reports to the Director General, Directorate for Educational Services; giving feedback on cases on request to heads, counsellors and guidance teachers; continuous updating of the database and filing

system; inputting of information in the database; attending courses offered by the Directorate for Educational Services or on own initiative; updating of the website: <http://schoolnet.gov.mt/safe/css/>

- *Statistics*

Service	Frequency
Consultation by phone	numerous
Consultation on school premises	234
Consultation and Coordination (with police/parents/counsellors)	197
Case Reviews	57
Court Summons	1
Staff Training	26
Primary Safety Programme Year 4's, including individual follow up	129 Classes
Council of Heads	7
Sports Policy Commission	10
Primary Safety Programme	2
Secondary Safety Programme	134 Classes
Parents' awareness programme for primary schools	29
Parents' preparatory meeting for year 4 programme	59
Parents' awareness programme for secondary schools	27
Parents' awareness programme on Internet Safety for secondary schools	22
SMT meetings	29
Counselling sessions	560
Meetings with other agencies on shared projects	3
Class observation	3
Joint school activities with Police officials	5
Joint school activities with the Drama Unit	11
Meeting with Directors/Service Managers	9
SENT meetings	41
Meetings with college principles	26
Tracing	409
Media	1
IEP	2
Supervision	50
In service Training	4
Training sessions for Career Advisors and Trainee Counsellors	12
Meetings with Appogg	4
Training for Learning Support Aids	2
Training for the staff at the Education Department	1
Total	2,106

- *Referrals*: In 2009, Child Safety Services received 279 new referrals regarding cases of child abuse; 21 were reactivated. The following table shows the types of cases referred to CSS. Cases closed – 146; cases referred to the Director General, Directorate for Student Services – 8.

Type of Abuse	Number of Referrals
Emotional	40
Neglect	56
Physical	47
Sexual	59
Emotional and Neglect	12
Emotional, Neglect and Physical	13
Emotional and Physical	24
Emotional, Physical and Sexual	6
Emotional, Neglect and Sexual	1
Emotional and Sexual	17
Neglect and Physical	11
Neglect, Physical and Sexual	1
Neglect and Sexual	6
Physical and Sexual	2
Physical, Sexual, Emotional & Neglect	3
Unknown	2
Total	300

SPECIAL EDUCATION AND RESOURCE CENTRES SECTION

The Special Education and Resource Centres Section is the base for the following services:

- two Peripatetic Teachers for students with visual impairment in mainstream schools;
- ten Early Intervention Peripatetic Teachers for children with special needs who are still of pre-school age or have started their school experience at kindergarten level;
- four Home Tuition Peripatetic Teachers for students who are absent from school on a long-term basis due to chronic illness or injury;
- one teacher and one LSA for students who attend the Young People's Unit of Mount Carmel Hospital;
- Peripatetic Teachers for the teaching of Creative Arts (one teacher for Music, two teachers for Drama, two teachers for Arts and Crafts) to students attending the Special Schools and St Patrick's Craft Centre;
- two Peripatetic Teachers for the teaching of PE and Sports to students attending the Special Schools and St Patrick's Craft Centre;
- two teachers, five kindergarten assistants and one LSA working on the Children's Wards at Mater Dei Hospital;
- two Peripatetic Teachers (transition programme organisers) in the transition programme for students moving from the Mainstream Schools to Special School and from Special schools to the adult training centres and to other educational establishments;
- two Speech and Language Pathologists, two Occupational Therapists, one LSA working in the Access to Communication and Technology Unit (ACTU);
- three Peripatetic teachers working in the Autism Spectrum Disorder Team;
- thirteen Peripatetic Teachers for the Hearing Impaired who offer support to students with a Hearing Impairment attending mainstream schools;
- Peripatetic Teachers for students with visual impairments.

Peripatetic service for students with visual impairment

The peripatetic teachers for students with visual impairment endeavour to empower students with visual impairment to develop to their full potential by giving them support to access the curriculum, to integrate in the school and to become active members of society. During scholastic year 2008/2009 the peripatetic teachers worked with students in different localities. A regular service was also introduced to cater for children from 0 to 5 years. The following tables show the number of students seen according to age, gender and locality.

Ages 0 - 5			
<i>Residence</i>	<i>Boy</i>	<i>Girl</i>	<i>Age</i>
M'Scala	0	3	3, 3, 4
Mqabba	1	0	5
Paola	2	0	2, 1
San Ġwann	0	2	2, 3
Sigġiewi	1	0	4
St Paul's Bay	1	0	3
St Paul's Bay	0	1	3
Swatar	1	0	4
Żurrieq	1	0	2
Total	7	6	13 students

Age 5+			
<i>Residence</i>	<i>Boy</i>	<i>Girl</i>	<i>Age</i>
Balzan	1	0	10
B'Bugħa	3	0	8, 8, 9
B'Kara	2	0	11, 15
B'Kara	0	1	13
Bahrija	0	2	10, 13
Dingli	0	1	16
Fgura	0	1	11

Fgura	1	0	11
Ghaxaq	1	0	13
Gudja	1	0	15
M'Scala	1	1	7 (Boy), 10 (Girl)
Mosta	0	1	10
Mqabba	0	1	14
Msida	1	0	8
Naxxar	0	2	9, 20
Qormi	1	0	11
Qormi	0	1	9
San Ġwann	2	1	11, 12 (Boys), 7 (Girl)
Siggiewi	1	0	16
St Julians	1	0	12
St Paul's Bay	1	0	7
Sta Venera	0	1	15
Tarxien	0	1	14
Valletta	1	0	16
Xewkija, Gozo	1	0	8
Żebbuġ	1	0	9
Żebbuġ	0	1	12
Żejtun	3	0	12, 12, 13
Żejtun	0	3	8, 9, 10
Total	23	18	41 students

Early Intervention Service

This service helps children to develop their full potential in spite of their needs and to pave the way for their future year in school. The service also aims to provide support to the parents/legal guardians tutors, teachers and LSAs in the holistic educational development of the children and their inclusion in the school. During scholastic year 2008/2009, the ten early intervention teachers worked with a total of 436 in Malta and Gozo. The following tables show the number of children seen according to age and gender.

Children seen by early intervention teachers in Malta during scholastic year 2008/2009			
<i>Age</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
0	2	0	2
1	4	3	7
2	15	8	23
3	50	24	74
4	99	45	144
5	109	46	155
6	7	3	10
7	1	0	1
Total	287	129	416
Children seen by early intervention teachers in Gozo during scholastic year 2008/2009			
<i>Age</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
0	0	0	0
1	0	0	0
2	4	0	4
3	4	3	7
4	7	4	11
5	6	2	8
6	1	1	2
Total	22	10	32

Home Tuition Service

This service provides the student with a continuous education and minimises the effects of absence from school. The service also helps the student to reintegrate back in school at the appropriate time. During scholastic year 2008/2009, home tuition was given to a total of 36 students in different localities in Malta and Gozo. Students referred to the Home Tuition service this year were as follows:

Ages	Male	Female
16	0	1
15	2	2
14	3	2
13	6	0
12	1	0
11	0	2
10	1	3
9	1	0
8	1	1
7	2	0
6	3	1
5	0	0

Locality	Males	Females
Balzan	1	0
Birkirkara	1	0
B'Bugia	1	0
Burmarrad	1	0
Fgura	1	0
Floriana	1	0
Marsa	1	1
Marsascala	1	2
Mosta	1	0
Msida	1	1
Naxxar	0	1
Paola	0	1
Pembroke	0	1
Qormi	1	1
San Ġwann	1	0
Senglea	2	0
Siggiewi	1	1
Swieqi	1	0
Żabbar	4	0
Żebbug	0	2
Żejtun	0	1

Access to Communication and Technology Unit (ACTU)

This Unit was established in September 2006 with the aim of providing the necessary support to enable students with learning disabilities to access the curriculum and learning through the use of assistive technology. During 2009 the Unit assessed and supported 217 students with different levels of difficulties.

In September 2009, the Directorate for Educational Services employed two Speech and Language Pathologists and two Occupational Therapist to support this Unit. Their expertise will ensure holistic, all-round assessments and support for the students referred to the Unit.

The Unit is also committed to providing the appropriate training on assistive technology and providing alternative communication systems to individuals with Complex Communication Needs. The following is an overview of the training given by the unit during 2009:

- *Module:* Support students with communication difficulties - 22 hours of training on the process of communication, language development, symbols, symbolic understanding and rate enhancement, aided and unaided communication, supporting students with PMLD, Supporting students with ASD, Support strategies for students with ASD, Access issues, Setting up a visual classroom, putting signs into practice, literacy development and AAC and Applied Behavioural Analysis. This training is provided to LSA 20 week certificate in supporting students with Individual Educational Needs;
- *A Training and Information Session:* provided to Assistant Heads on the role of ACTU in order for more students in Secondary schools to benefit from the services;
- *Training and Information:* provided to Primary INCOs and trainee Secondary INCOs.

Autism Spectrum Support Team

The autism spectrum support service recognises that each student is an individual, and seeks to maximise the student's potential. It aims to empower educators and parents to meet the individual educational needs of the child with autism, facilitating learning, supporting behavioural and social development and maximising on students abilities in mainstream and resource environment. From the beginning of scholastic year 2008/09, the Autism Spectrum Support Team covered 32 different primary schools.

Service for the Hearing Impaired

The aim of the service for hearing impaired students is to provide a quality educational and audio logical service for deaf, hard of hearing and hearing-impaired students in Malta and Gozo, from the point of diagnosis and throughout their educational experience in the home and in mainstream schools.

During scholastic year 2008/2009, the teachers supported a total of 98 students in State, Church and Independent schools in Malta and Gozo. One of these teachers who also specialises in audiological assessments, provided audiological services to these students.

Special Schools (*)

The Special Education Section is responsible for the running of four Special Schools in Malta, namely Guardian Angel School, Hamrun, Dun Manwel Attard School, Wardija, Helen Keller School, Qrendi, San Miguel School, Pembroke.

*In June 2009 the Special School Reform was launched with the main aim of changing the role of these special schools into that of Resource Centres. These centres will not only cater for the students who currently attend on a full-time basis, but will also offer their services, such as multi-sensory programmes, to students with Individual Educational Need in mainstream schools. One of the special schools has already been functioning successfully as a Resource Centre for a number of years. Specialised staff working in the four Resource Centres will also be trained to give support to their colleagues in mainstream schools, thus ensuring that students with Individual Needs have access to a wide and varied curriculum. This reform will also bring about a shift from the present scenario experienced by students attending these schools. Currently, students remain in the same school right through their school life. With the reform, these students will be able to experience the different phases of school life as do their peers in mainstream schools. For this purpose, the four special schools will start to function as:

- a Primary Education Resource Centre;
- a Secondary Education Resource Centre;
- a Secondary/Adult Education Resource centre (For Students with Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties);
- a Young Adult Education Resource Centre.

The Young Adult Education Resource Centre will cater for students beyond the compulsory school age of 16 up to 22 years of age. The programme in this centre is designed to continue to give the students personal development skills, while also giving them employability skills through various in-house and community based activities and experiences.

The section is also responsible for the running of the St Patrick's Craft Centre at Pembroke and Mater Dei School, Msida.

During 2009 Heads of Special Schools met regularly with the Director Student Services and the Service Manager for Special Education and Resource Centres.

All the special schools benefit from the services of a social worker. The following is an overview of services provided.

Social work activities in Special Schools	
<i>Type of Service</i>	
Home visits	56
School visits	49
Case Conferences	9
Case Reviews	5
Social work intervention at Unit	38
Social Work Counselling	30
Referrals Out	21
Meetings	24

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION SECTION

During the year, the total number of personnel employed to support students with special needs rose from 1,248 to 1,314, supporting 1,947 students in the state school sector. Various initiatives to support inclusion in schools were taken by the department. This included the training of another 78 Supply Learning Support Assistants (SLSAs) at certificate of attendance level (10-week course) and 360 S/LSAs at Certificate in Education for Learning Support Assistants level (20-week course).

In order to facilitate the transition from primary to secondary school, transition exercises for students with special needs were held. These were conducted by the Inclusion Coordinators (INCOs). Primary and secondary school personnel were also involved in the process. In all, 212 transitions were held between April and July.

A course was also held for Heads and Assistant Heads in Secondary Schools. This course was held over a period of seven weeks, where Inclusive Education was discussed and everyone was informed of all the recent new student services available.

During 2009, the Service Manager responsible for Inclusive Education conducted various mentoring and monitoring visits to different schools. During these visits, support and advice is given to SMT, teachers and LSAs supporting students with Individual Educational Needs. Information sessions were also held in different schools for LSAs and roles were discussed.

Inclusion Coordinators

Thirteen Inclusion Coordinators are supporting the Primary School sector in the Colleges. The INCOs are all College-based but monthly meetings are held with the Service Manager in order to coordinate work in a better way.

As of October 2009, 15 teachers have started their MEd course in Inclusive Education (Secondary School). This is a three-year course being conducted by the Student Service Department and the University of Malta through ESF funding. The students will be deployed in Secondary Schools as from January 2010 as Trainee INCOs.

Setting up of Learning Support Zones/Nurture Groups

During the year, eight Learning Support Zones (LSZ) were set up in secondary schools, offering support to students with Social, Emotional Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD). Four Nurture Groups were also set up in Primary Schools, offering support to children at primary level. An induction course was offered to the LSZ personnel and a Guidelines booklet was prepared so that the LSZ will all have common ground to work in.

Youth Workers

Three Youth Workers have been employed. These followed an induction course and are now deployed in three Colleges working within the Secondary School sector, supporting students at risk and also whole school projects.

Professional Development

The Student Services Department is committed to providing training opportunities to all the staff, including those in mainstream and resource centres. The Department organised various training and informative sessions during 2009. These included:

- *Keyword signing for students with learning disabilities*: This training programme was conducted by an experienced sign language interpreter. Members of staff from four resource centres were trained in the use of manual sign systems for students with learning disabilities. To date, a total of 21 teachers and 17 learning support assistants have been trained.
- *Teachers of the Hearing Impaired* are receiving ongoing training at the Student Services Department in Hamrun.
- *Speech therapists at ACTU* were given further training on Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) abroad in order to be able to better support students with communication difficulties.

INSET Courses

As part of the ongoing training for Teachers of the Hearing Impaired, an Inset course was organised by the Student Services Department on Language Development of Students with a Hearing Impairment. This was given by experts in the field from the University of Malta.

A number of Inset courses related to communication difficulties were organised by the Education Officer of Special and Inclusive Education. The ACTU team was involved in delivering these Inset courses. These included Understanding Autism Spectrum Disorders: Practical Strategies and Resources, Key word signing for students with Learning Disabilities, and Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) for Students with Complex Communication Needs (CCNs).

Support to other organisations

During scholastic year 2008/2009, the Department offered support to MCAST. This was done through the provision of two teachers and one supply learning support assistant for their Pathway programme. This programme is also supported by the Transition coordinator provided by the same department.

Statementing Moderating Panel

During 2009 the Statementing Moderating Panel carried out 38 sessions during which 430 students were statemented. Out of these, 341 children were given support.

PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

International Relations

Spring Day in Europe 2009

This is an initiative by the European Commission to encourage students to learn more about the EU and to voice their views and concerns regarding its future. It also aims to raise awareness on how young European citizens can join forces with European institutions for better dialogue and understanding of European democratic developments. In line with the decision of the European Parliament, the focus of the 2009 edition was on creativity and innovation. *Ideas move Europe* was chosen as the 2009 motto. Thirteen schools registered online with Spring Day for Europe 2009 and participated in activities and competitions held both locally and also online. Two local schools, St Nicholas College Mtarfa Boys' Secondary and St Benedict College Tarxien Girls' Secondary won awards in competitions organised in the participating countries from 1,600 entries.

DVD Carbon Footprints

As part of the Spring Day in Europe 2009 activities, a DVD was launched on 25 April at Luqa Primary School. This was produced by the European Commission in Malta, the Ministry of Resources and Rural Affairs and Reel8 Productions in collaboration with the Meteorological Office at the Malta International Airport. The DVD addresses the implications of global warming and climate change both locally and also globally. A Press Conference was aired on a local channel. The DVD has been distributed to all primary and secondary schools with the main objective being for it to serve as a platform for further discussion.

European Development Youth Prize 2008/2009

This competition, organised by the European Schoolnet in Brussels, was open to students in Europe between the ages of 16 and 18. The competition included posters focusing on the themes of Gender Equality, Children and Youth and Cultural Diversity. The national winners (two in all) went to Stockholm in October 2009 and were awarded their prizes by the European Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid at the fair entitled 'European Development Days'. One of the Maltese students was among the finalists who will go on a five-day trip to an African country to get first-hand experience about development cooperation between the two continents. The aim of the competition is to raise awareness about how development cooperation between Europe and Africa works. A number of students from three post-secondary schools participated in this competition.

Europa Diaries 2009 – 2010

A number of Europa Diaries together with teacher's handbooks were distributed to each College. The teacher's guide complements the Europa Diary and proposes activities to be run in conjunction with the editorial content of the Diary. It also includes worksheets and suggestions of lesson plans. This new edition of the Europa Diary addresses a number of new topics including sustainable food production, renewable sources of energy, health policy-making, globalisation and even sustainable tourism. It also includes the European Union, consumer and environmental issues, trade, external relations, development aid and fundamental human rights. This material is funded by the European Commission and is produced by the Generation Europe Foundation in cooperation with the Consumer Affairs Directorate within the Consumer and Competition Division.

European Social Funds (ESF) Project

The Project Career Guidance Capacity Building has been initiated through these funds. Within this project, scholarship grants were awarded to persons who qualified to carry out a post-graduate Diploma or Masters Degree in Career Guidance.

Links

Circulars are regularly sent to schools to make teachers aware of European and international initiatives that can be taken up and information is passed on to schools to participate in European and international competitions. Such entities are the Child Friendly Schools Project (CFS), the Steering Committee for Education (CDED) within the Council of Europe and the Commonwealth of Learning within which falls the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC). E-mails are also forwarded by the Istituto Italiano di Cultura to be disseminated to schools.

Local Initiatives

World Consumers' Rights Day

This was coordinated with Education officials and officials from the Consumer and Competition Division with regard to educational activities that were aimed at the whole family. These were held at the National Park at Ta' Qali on March 15 to mark World Consumers' Rights Day. This year's theme was *Advertising: Fact or Fiction* and schools were urged to encourage students to attend and participate in the activities while gaining first-hand information on their rights as tomorrow's consumers.

HSBC Eco-Schools Climate Change Project

Climate change becomes an international theme for schools supported by the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE), the Ministry of Resources and Rural Affairs, the Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education and the Projects and Initiatives Section whose Service Manager forms part of the Steering Committee. The HSBC Eco-Schools Climate Change Initiative was launched on 17 November at the Xrobb l-Ghagin Nature Park and was attended by some 300 children from schools in Malta and Gozo. This initiative involves HSBC employees known as HSBC Climate Champions who are volunteering time to help schools address a variety of environmental themes ranging from energy, transport and waste to water and biodiversity in relation to climate change.

HELP

This section is also represented on the HELP committee, attending various meetings in connection with Healthy Eating Lifestyle Plan in schools. Meetings were held with student councils and Heads of School. Professional Development Sessions on Promoting a Healthy Lifestyle are also being conducted.

School Councils

During the year under review, there were 101 councils in mainstream schools (70 in primary, 31 in secondary), four in special schools and two post-secondary schools. The School Councils' Section dealt with enquires and information regarding school councils including collection and checking of annual reports, monthly council meetings agenda and reports. The section also supervised and assisted the council elections which took place during January 2009.

EU Milk Scheme

This year the section dealt once more with the EU Milk Subsidy Scheme. 55 State Schools benefited from this scheme.

EU School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme

Various meetings were attended in preparation of the EU Fruit and Vegetable Scheme (SFS). Meetings with College Principals and Heads of School were held. A poster competition was organised with over 600 students participating in this competition. Over 100 schools (state and non-state) have already applied for this scheme which is due to start in January 2010.

Radio Programme

Another duty of this section is to coordinate a weekly slot for a radio programme on Radju Malta. Different persons covering various topics on education are invited to provide input.

Education 22

Two days per week, a representative of this section performs duties at E22. Amongst other things she produces and presents a weekly TV programme and also assists in the production of a daily programme.

Skolasajf

Skolasajf 2009 was officially launched by the Director Student Services at San Ġorġ Preca College Primary Ħamrun on 2 June. The main theme chosen for 2009 was *Creative Skills - Arts - Culture - Environment*. Skolasajf catered for primary school pupils in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6. A promotional brochure was distributed to all primary schools catering for this age group. Some 3,385 pupils participated in the Skolasajf Programme at 60 centres in Malta and Gozo. The Cospicua, Gżira, Senglea, Sliema, Valletta, Vittoriosa and Xewkija centres did not open due to the low number of enrolments. Pupils interested were offered the opportunity to enrol at nearby centres.

All children attending Special Schools were offered the opportunity to attend and participate in the programme – Special Centres were opened at Wardija, Guardian Angel and San Miguel in Malta and those in Gozo were hosted at the Arka at Ghajnsielem.

Seminars

Separate seminars were held for the first and second sessions Centre Coordinators and Project Coordinators – these seminars were held at the Palace Hotel in Sliema. This venue was made possible through the help of the General Manager who offered the hotel premises for free. Meeting in smaller groups enabled the Coordinators to make the seminars very much their own.

Klabbsajf

Klabbsajf, a programme that catered for Year 2/3 pupils who during scholastic year 2008/9 were receiving complementary education, kept its share of popularity. Ten centres in Malta and three in Gozo were opened to cater for around 170 pupils, who enrolled. This programme was sponsored by the HSBC.

Special Programmes

Special Programmes were conducted by the European Commission Representation in Malta, Sedqa, Caritas, Fondazzjoni Wirt Artna, Heritage Malta, Heritage Malta (Gozo), Campus FM, Southend Volleyball Club, the Malta DanceSport Association, Moving Theatre, WasteServ Malta Ltd, the Tourism and Sustainable Development Unit (TSDU), the Institute of Tourism Studies, the Golden Harvest, the Unjoni Ħaddiema Magħqudin Youths and Nature Trust.

New Initiatives

Skolasajf 2009 saw the introduction of:

- The *Apprezza* Project – a project funded by the TSDU to promote awareness regarding the importance of tourism;
- Visits to the Golden Harvest Factory;
- *Read me like a book* - Visits to Skolasajf centres by Maltese and Italian students to promote cultural awareness through games;
- Visits to Dar l-Ewropa;
- The re-introduction of the Weekend Live-In Programmes at the M'Xlokk Youth Hostel;
- Dancing sessions led by the Malta DanceSport Association;
- VolleyFun sessions;
- Language Awareness Programme – a pilot project launched in Gozo;
- Participation by pupils from Skolasajf in the opening session of the New Teachers' Induction Seminar;
- Visits to supermarkets by Skolasajf pupils as part of the Batterina Campaign. These were led by Wasteserv.

Competitions

- *Weetabix Painting/Drawing Competition*: The theme was: The Most Fantastic Machine or Garden or City. Some 766 entries reached the Skolasajf Office. The 31 winning entries were each given a book voucher. The three overall winners and the respective schools where they were enrolled were also awarded book vouchers. The winners were rewarded at special ceremonies held in Malta and in Gozo. Pupils were accompanied by their respective parents. The book vouchers were sponsored by Paolo Bonnici Ltd, agents in Malta for Weetabix.
- *Drawing Competition organised by the office of The Commissioner for Children*: In collaboration with the Skolasajf team, the office of the Commissioner for Children launched a drawing competition. The theme *Childrens' Rights* - Section 'A' was an A4 drawing and there were 370 submissions. Section 'B' was a Bookmark submission and there were 183 entries. The eight winning entries from Section 'A' and the two winning entries from Section 'B' were rewarded at a Prize-Giving ceremony held on 16 September 2009 at the Commissioner's office in St Venera.
- *3D Model Competition organised by the European Commission Representation in Malta*: A 3D Model competition was organised by the EC Representation in Malta in collaboration with the Skolasajf Office. Ninety-two models were submitted and the judging panel short-listed the best twelve. These were rewarded at a ceremony held on 22 September at the EC Representation in Malta. Dr Joanna Drake, Head of the ECRM, Dr Chris Bezzina, Permanent Secretary MEDC and Ms Mary Rose DeBono, Service Manager, Projects and Initiatives led the ceremony. Vodafone were the main sponsors.
- *Art/Prose Competition*: An Art/Prose Competition entitled *San Frangisk u n-Natura* was organised in conjunction with the Peace Laboratory. The feedback that reached our office indicated that participation was very good. The Prize-Giving Ceremony is yet to be held.
- *Anti-Smoking Campaign*: This campaign was organised in conjunction with the Youth Section of the Unjoni Haddiema Magħqudin. A drawing competition was held during interactive sessions held at all the Skolasajf centres – both in Malta and Gozo. The best drawings from each centre were rewarded at two separate ceremonies held in Malta and in Gozo. The Minister of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, the Hon Dolores Cristina, presented the rewards to the winning entries in Malta at a ceremony held at the Directorate's foyer on 15 September. The Parliamentary Secretary for Public Consultation and Information Dr Chris Said presided over the ceremony held in Gozo on 17 September at the foyer of the Ninu Cremona Lyceum Complex.
- *Centre-Based and Pupils' Portfolios*: Centre Coordinators and individual pupils were encouraged to submit portfolios. Submissions were of a very high standard. The best three centre-based and the best three individual portfolios were awarded book vouchers at a ceremony held at the Directorate's foyer on 15 September during the ceremony for the Anti-Smoking Campaign.
- *Collection in aid of the Community Chest Fund*: The sum of €2,503.92 was raised in aid of the Community Chest Fund. Such funds were collected during the centre-based Talent Shows and from the

voluntary door-to-door collections performed by pupils who attended the Skolasajf programme. The sum of money collected was presented to HE The President of Malta, Dr George Abela, at a ceremony held at the Palace on 10 November.

- *The Weetabix Educational Quiz:* All Skolasajf centres in Malta and Gozo participated in this Quiz. Over 224 pupils took part in teams of four. Thirteen preliminary sessions and two semi-finals were held. The final itself was held on 26 August at the Mgarr Skolasajf Centre. All those pupils who participated were given a polo-shirt and a cap each. All finalists were given a medal each and a trophy was given to the five centres who reached the final. The Quiz was sponsored by Weetabix.
- *The Weetabix Fun Games Festivals:* For yet another year such festivals proved to be very popular and were very well received by all Skolasajf stakeholders. The Final of the Fun Games Festivals, sponsored by Weetabix, was held on 2 September at the gym of St Martin's College, Swatar. Pupils reaching the final were given a medal each, while the five centres which reached the final were presented with a trophy each.
- *Open Days/Talent Shows:* All Skolasajf centres held an Open Day/Talent Show for parents. These events were held during the last week of Skolasajf and the feedback we received was very encouraging. These well-organised activities were attended by quite a good number of parents and other relatives.

Eleven Project Coordinators, six Coordinating Mentors, 120 centre Coordinators, 86 Learning Support Assistants and about 250 university students were deployed in the whole programme of Skolasajf 2009.

School Library Service (SLS)

Computerisation Project

The project entered its 5th year with prospects of going live in 2010. The system, called OLIVER, will be going live in three schools in January 2010. The User Acceptance Testing (UAT) was finalised at the end of December. Training was given to staff in most of the 17 schools/units that now share the common database. The year also saw the inclusion of St Joseph Blata l-Bajda as the first non-state school. The other four entities were SPLD, St Clare College St Julians Primary, Pembroke Primary and Pembroke Girls' Junior Lyceum. As the current set-up is too slow for the needs of the Section, the SLS awaits to have its own Wide Area Network set-up.

Collection development

The central database (the online catalogue) rose to 104,000 items, 26,484 of which were added in 2009. Work started on five new libraries during the year. Weeding library collections was carried out in a number of schools. A total of 7,571 books were either recycled or added to the Special Collections Scheme. The latter had 4,847 fiction titles and 15,078 information books by the end of the year.

Professional Development Courses

Courses were run on Monday afternoons for teacher-librarians in state secondary schools. Three training manuals on using the Oliver Library Management System were prepared. They were distributed during three days of intensive training for teacher-librarians in schools using the system. The premises were also opened to the Malta School Library Association to run an evening course on MARC21 cataloguing. Training was undertaken for a number of parents from primary schools whose libraries were upgraded during the year.

Activities

The annual quiz in respect of World Book Day (23 April) for secondary schools had 743 students participating from 17 schools. First place went to St Monica School, Gzira. Consolation prizes were awarded to the best entry from each school.

The writing competition for the primary schools was another success, with 863 students from 22 schools. Prizes were given for the best entry for years four, five and six. Two prizes went to St Francis Schools in Gozo and St Margaret College Cospicua Primary, and another to St Monica School, Gżira. Consolation prizes were also awarded. A new prize was started this year - The Joseph Boffa Prize. This prize was awarded to a student from Gozo College, Primary School, Għarb. Teacher-librarians from state schools were invited to the prize-giving ceremony and each school received a donation of books provided by the Central Bank of Malta.

Fourteen librarians from CILIP led by Dr Mike Freeman visited the SLS on 25 March and were shown the extent of work carried out. They were also taken to the library at the Maria Regina College Mosta Girls' Secondary.

A meeting with College Principals to acquaint them with the work of the SLS was held in May. Each participant was given a 33-page illustrated booklet explaining the services offered.

The School Library Award for 2009 went to Giovanni Curmi, Higher Secondary School, Naxxar. The Librarian of the Year Award was awarded to the librarian at St Martin's College, Swatar. Awards were handed out at a special ceremony by the Director, Student Services Department.

Lists of new books/Exhibition centre

Eight monthly booklists for primary and secondary schools respectively, as well as nine special subject lists were printed and mailed to state schools. Most of the books in these lists were added to our exhibition collection while out of print ones were removed. It is expected that in 2010 these lists will be put online through the library management software. A number of primary and secondary schools requested and were provided with lists of suitable titles for adding more books to their respective libraries.

Book processing for schools outside the computerisation project

More than 13,000 books from numerous primary and secondary schools were sent to the SLS for processing. It is worth mentioning that the following schools sent their whole stock for processing: Victoria Primary; Siggiewi Primary; St Julians Primary, Pembroke Primary; San Ġwann Primary B; Gżira Boys' Secondary and Qormi Boys' Secondary.

Upgrading libraries

Library site plans were provided to the primary schools at Mtarfa, Msida, Qrendi and Pembroke.

New shelving units were supplied by FTS to St Margaret College Boys' Secondary School, Verdala. These were put in place by the contractor and books were put on the proper shelves by SLS staff assisted by the teacher-librarians. This library forms part of the computerisation project.

San Ġorġ Preca College Boys' Junior Lyceum, Hamrun was also supplied with new shelving. As this library is not in the OLIVER project, a thorough weeding was necessary before the books could be put on the shelves by SLS staff.

The library at St Clare College St Julians Primary was added to the computerisation project with the intention of using it as a training ground.

The St Clare College Pembroke Primary moved to new purpose-built premises and opened its doors in October with a brand new library complete with modern furniture. A site plan and furniture specifications were forwarded to the FTS by the SLS earlier in the year. It was decided to add this library to the OLIVER database and this was accomplished before the official opening of the school.

St Ignatius College Qormi Boys' Secondary closed down at the end of the 2008-2009 scholastic year. All the books were moved to the SLS for redistribution to other schools. The furniture was sent to St Ignatius College Żebbuġ Boys' Secondary which was also the venue for a complete make-over of this library by SLS staff assisted by the teacher-librarian.

The library at St Clare College Pembroke Girls' Secondary was moved to alternative premises by SLS staff during the summer holidays.

DVD collection

A DVD collection for the purpose of lending to schools is currently being set up. In this current year, 550 DVDs were purchased.

Archives

The SLS is the custodian of school admission registers of schools that are closed down. The total of such registers now amounts to 108. In 2009, the section issued 244 school attendance certificates. 22 registers were repaired and rebound with funds provided by the Director Student Services Department.

Library statistics

Statistics from around 34 secondary schools were collected. The total number of books in these schools amounts to 190,391. With a total of 18,439 students, this gives a ratio of 10.3 per head. One must however note that more than 50% of the books in school libraries need to be replaced. Approximately 8,065 books were added throughout the year. The number of periodicals purchased rose to 62. Loans in 2009 were 60,881 and that is about 3.3 books per student.

Interviews

Interviews for the post of teacher-librarians in state schools for scholastic years 2009-2011 were held in June. 108 applications were received. 66 applicants were interviewed.

Interviews for the post of teacher-librarian at the SLS were carried out. The chosen person returned to teaching duties before the end of 2009.

Youth Service Organisation

The main objectives of this section are student exchanges, competitions in schools and exhibitions of works by students as well as other initiatives with NGOs.

Student Exchanges

The following exchanges took place in 2009:

Outgoing Country	Students	Teachers	Participating School/s
Corinaldo, Italy	14	2	St Thomas More GJL, Żejtun
Reggio Calabria, Italy	20	3	St Clare's College San Ġwann Primary B
Winterthur, Switzerland	23	2	St Ignatius College BSS Handaq/GJL, Blata l-Bajda
Le Tour du Pin, France	17	3	St Thomas More College BSS, Paola/Maria Regina College GSS, Mosta
Oss, Holland	22	3	St Margaret College BSS, Verdala
Morocco	12	2	St Margaret College GSS, Cospicua/BSS, Verdala (Fortini Annexe)
Total	108	15	

Incoming Country	Students	Teachers	Participating School/s
Reggio Calabria, Italy	15	3	St Clare's College San Gwann Primary B
Landshut, Germany	18	3	St Ignatius College GJL, Blata l-Bajda/ St Gorg Preca College GSS, Hamrun
Le Tour du Pin, France	22	3	St Thomas More College BSS, Paola/ Maria Regina College GSS, Mosta
Winterthur, Switzerland	23	2	St Ignatius College: BSS Handaq/GJL, Blata l-Bajda
Corinaldo, Italy	17	3	St Thomas More GJL, Zejtun
Oss, Holland	29	2	St Margaret College GSS, Cospicua/ BSS, Verdala (Fortini Annexe)
Morocco	18	2	St Margaret College GSS, Cospicua/ BSS, Verdala (Fortini Annexe)
Oss, Holland	29	2	St Margaret College BSS, Verdala
Total	19	2	

Marsaxlokk Youth Hostel

In addition to the above-mentioned exchange groups, other groups and organisations made use of the hostel on other occasions which included the Caritas group on 13 weekends catering for the 424 participants and other organisations on a number of weekends or day seminars amounting to 589 persons. The total number of persons making use of the hostel for the weekends in 2009 amounted to about 1,013.

The hostel underwent regular maintenance works like whitewashing and painting of rooms and corridors, electricity and water repairs as well as general furniture maintenance. The fire-extinguishers, water pumps, emergency lights and air-conditioning unit were serviced. New chairs, an automatic washing machine, towel and soap dispensers and a ceiling fan were purchased during this year.

Competitions

- *Carnival Painting and Craft Competition 2009*: This competition was organised to promote Maltese cultural activities. Students were invited to take part in mask making, painting or collage as well as miniature floats. Entries were exhibited at the Education Foyer. Due to the numbers involved, only the best ten entries from each school were accepted. Fifty-two schools from primary, secondary and special schools participated in this competition.
- *Christmas Crib Competition*: This is an annual activity open for both primary and secondary schools - 480 cribs from 29 schools participated in the two categories *The Traditional Maltese Christmas Crib* and *The Modern Christmas Crib*. Selected cribs will be presented to HE The President of Malta and all proceeds were forwarded to the Community Chest Fund. An exhibition was later held at the Education Foyer.
- *Children's Painting Competition organised by the China Cultural Centre*: The 3rd Children's Painting Competition for primary students was entitled *Environment: I Love a Green Earth*. Its aims are to enable a better understanding of what is the environment, the consequences of its damage, how to protect the environment and how to keep a green Earth. 70 paintings from 10 schools participated in this competition. Works were exhibited at the Art Gallery of the China Cultural Centre.
- *PowerPoint Presentation Competition – Workers' Day 1st May*: The YSO and the Health and Safety Unit within the Directorates of Education in collaboration with the UHM organised a powerpoint presentation competition on the occasion of Workers' Day. The aim of this competition was to promote awareness of different aspects of Occupational Health and Safety and was open to students in Forms 3, 4, 5 and post-secondary schools. The prize-giving ceremony was held on 1 May. 31 students from 12 schools participated in this competition.
- *Malta Football Association's League Anniversary Quiz*: To celebrate the 100th anniversary since the commencement of its Football League Competitions, YSO in collaboration with MFA organised an inter-school quiz for male and female students born between 1995 and 1998. This competition is ongoing until 2010. Four schools participated in this competition.

- *European Science Parliament (ESP) 2009/2010*: This conference is to promote discussions on a range of topics on sciences, society and politics across Europe. For this year the main topic was water. The project was divided in two phases – phase one is an online discussion via a web portal while phase two takes place in Aachen, Germany in 2010. In the second phase, participants meet to discuss their submissions.
- *The Great Siege Events Museum school excursion/competition*: YSO, in collaboration with The Great Siege and Agenda Bookshop, organised a story writing and drawing competition. Schools were invited to organise excursions to the Museum and participate in the competition on the theme *Walk through the Great Siege of Malta*. They were asked to express themselves about what struck them most. This competition will run till April 2010.
- *Educational project to commemorate the 20 years of the fall of the Berlin Wall*: This project for primary pupils was financed by the French Ministry for European Affairs. Primary schools from each of the 27 EU member states were asked to release 99 “borderless balloons” on 9 November. School children from the ten colleges participated in this project which was intended to inform people and encourage dialogue between Europeans. This initiative was held at the Upper Barrakka Gardens in Valletta. Each pupil drafted a small message in English to indicate the motive for the release of the balloons. The message invited the person who received the balloon to answer back through the school.
- *Crocus Project*: This project is a tangible way to introduce young people to the subject of the Holocaust and to raise awareness about the dangers of racism, discrimination, prejudice and bigotry. Through the Malta UNESCO Youth Association, students aged eleven years and upwards from over the world are yearly given yellow crocus bulbs to plant in autumn, in memory of Jewish children and thousands of other children who died in the Holocaust. The yellow flowers recall the yellow Stars of David that Jews were forced to wear under Nazi rule. 22 schools accepted to take part in this project and plant the bulbs.
- *Piggy Bank Campaign*: YSO liaised with the President’s office so as to organise and facilitate matters during Mrs Abela visit to state, church and independent schools in connection with the distribution of piggy banks to school children as part of the fund-raising activities for the Community Chest Fund.
- *Annual Christmas Mass*: YSO organised the children’s Christmas Mass at St John’s Co-Cathedral. HE The Archbishop concelebrated mass while the event was presided over by HE The President of Malta and Mrs Abela. The Hon Clyde Puli, Parliamentary Secretary for Youth and Sport, as well as a number of high officials from the Education Directorates also attended. The children’s Christmas mass launches the Milied Flimkien Campaign for the Community Chest Fund.

GEORGE BORG

Director (Student Services)

Examinations Department

Mission Statement

To administer local and overseas examinations that fairly and fully allow the demonstration of the candidates' learning abilities.

GENERAL

The organisation of the SEC and MATSEC examinations constitutes a substantial portion of the department's activities year after year. During the year in review approximately 11,000 students applied for the SEC and MATSEC May session while 3,600 applied for the September resits.

Preparatory work is taken in hand well before the actual examinations. This consisted in the registration of applications in November/December of the previous year, providing accommodation for all the candidates in the 25 exam centres around Malta and Gozo, the appointment and distribution of 500 invigilators and supervisors, compilation and posting of timetables and the provision of all necessary arrangements for candidates with special needs. Five briefing sessions were organised for all the Supervisors and Invigilators outlining their duties and responsibilities to ensure a smooth and efficient procedure during examinations.

Apart from the MATSEC exams, the department conducts various other examinations on behalf of several examining bodies, both local and foreign, such as Edexcel London, foreign universities diplomas and degrees, local public exams, ECDL in schools, English as a Foreign Language and others. Over 10,000 candidates sat for these examinations. Comprehensively this works out at over 120,000 individual sittings throughout the year.

ANALYSIS OF 2009 EXAMINATIONS

Secondary Education Certificate and Matriculation Examinations

Secondary Education Certificate May/June 2009

A total of 7,286 candidates sat for the Secondary Education Certificate examinations in May/June 2009 while 2,237 candidates sat for the September 2009 Re-sits. The total number who qualified for waiving of fees on Social Security grounds was 443.

Matriculation Certificate Examinations May/June 2009

A total of 2,438 candidates sat for the Matriculation Certificate in May 2009. There were 4,422 subject entries at Advanced Level and 8,844 subject entries at Intermediate Level for this session. Nine candidates qualified for waiving of fees on Social Security grounds.

Narrowly Failed Candidates

A total of 96 candidates sat for the Matriculation Certificate – Narrowly Failed Examination May 2009, with a total of 64 subject entries at Advanced Level and 117 subject entries at Intermediate Level.

Advanced and Intermediate Level Single Subjects

A total of 1,247 candidates sat for the May 2009 Session for Advanced and Intermediate Level Single Subjects Examinations with a total of 1,350 subject entries at Advanced Level and 290 subject entries at Intermediate Level. The number of candidates who qualified for waiving of fees on Social Security grounds was 14.

September Re-Sits 2009

A total of 1,348 candidates sat for the September 2009 session, with a total of 858 at Advanced Level and 741 at Intermediate Level for Matriculation Certificate, Single Subjects Examinations and for Narrowly Failed Examinations.

2009	May	Subject Entries		September	Subject Entries	
		Advanced	Intermediate		Advanced	Intermediate
Matsec Certificate	2,438	4,422	8,844	1,348	858	741
Narrowly Failed	96	64	117			
Adv & Int Single Subjects	1,247	1,350	290			

2009	May	Subject Entries	September	Subject Entries
SEC	7,286	45,987	2,237	3,279

Special Needs Arrangements

Requests for special arrangements during MATSEC examinations were all referred to the MATSEC Support Unit of the University of Malta. These were considered by the Special Needs Committee.

SEC Special Arrangements	May 2009	262
	September 2009	124
Advanced & Intermediate Special Arrangements	May 2009	30
	September 2009	17

EDEXCEL International London Examinations – January 2009 and May/June 2009

Edexcel London examinations are held twice a year, in January for the winter session and in May/June for the summer session at Ordinary and Advanced Level. The January session offers a limited number of subjects, while the May/June session subjects are offered on a wider scale. As in previous years there has been a constant decrease in the number of entries.

Session	Applications	Special Cases	Revision of Papers
January 2009	67	Nil	Nil
May/June 2009	1,921	12	9

Analysis of Results

Edexcel London 'O' Level - January 2009			
Subject Code	Subject Name	Sat	Pass
7011	Accounting	9	4
7040	Biology	3	1
7042	Human Biology	1	0
7081	Chemistry	2	1
7161	English Language	37	10
7361	Maths (Syllabus B)	8	1
7540	Physics	2	1
Total		62	18

<i>Edexcel London 'O' Level - May/June 2009</i>			
Subject Code	Subject Name	Sat	Pass
7011	Accounting	388	277
7020	Art and Design	97	67
7040	Biology	139	76
7042	Human Biology	55	21
7081	Chemistry	118	71
7120	Economics	131	80
7161	English Language	1,458	841
7171	English Literature	5	0
7193	French	28	9
7209	Geography	2	0
7361	Mathematics (Syllabus B)	60	9
7540	Physics	204	97
7646	Turkish	1	1
Total		2,686	1,549
<i>Edexcel London 'A' Level - January 2009</i>			
Subject Code	Subject Name	Sat	Pass
9011	Accounting	9	6
9040	Biology	4	2
Total		13	8
<i>Edexcel London 'A' Level - May/June 2009</i>			
Subject Code	Subject Name	Sat	Pass
9011	Accounting	142	126
9040	Biology	4	1
9080	Chemistry	1	1
9121	Economics	1	1
9179	English Language & Literature	3	1
9373	Pure Mathematics	2	2
Total		153	132

London Chamber of Commerce and Industry 2009 Examinations

The London Chamber of Commerce & Industry Examinations are held in Series 2 (Spring), Series 3 (Summer) and Series 4 (Autumn) of each year. Series 3 and Series 4 sessions have a wider range of subjects offered.

Entries of subjects that lead to a Diploma mainly come from MCAST. The total number of requests for Diploma Certificates for the year was 24. The total number of entries for 2009 were as follows:

Series 2 2009 Examinations	21 applications
Series 3 2009 Examinations	156 applications
Series 4 2009 Examinations	18 applications

<i>London Chamber of Commerce and Industry Examinations Series 4 - 2008</i>							
Part	Subject	Entries	Sat	Pass	Credit	Distinction	Fail
First Level	Text Production	11	11	2	3	1	5
Second Level	Text Production	6	6	2	1	0	3
Third Level	English for Business (Written)	1	1	0	0	1	0
	Text Production	9	9	2	1	0	6
	Certificate in Customer Service	1	1	0	0	0	1
	Selling and Sales Management	1	1	0	0	0	1
	Marketing	4	3	0	0	1	2
	Advertising	1	1	1	0	0	0
Total		34	33	7	5	3	17

London Chamber of Commerce Examinations Series 2 – 2009							
<i>Part</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Entries</i>	<i>Sat</i>	<i>Pass</i>	<i>Credit</i>	<i>Distinction</i>	<i>Fail</i>
First Level	Text Production	6	6	0	3	2	1
Second Level	Text Production	3	3	0	0	2	1
	Business Statistics	8	8	3	1	3	1
Third Level	English for Business (Written)	5	5	1	4	0	0
	Text Production	3	3	0	2	0	1
	Marketing	1	1	0	1	0	0
	Advertising	3	3	0	2	0	1
	Public Relations	5	5	0	2	3	0
Total		34	34	4	15	10	5
London Chamber of Commerce and Industry Series 3 – 2009							
<i>Part</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Entries</i>	<i>Sat</i>	<i>Pass</i>	<i>Credit</i>	<i>Distinction</i>	<i>Fail</i>
First Level	Book-keeping	10	9	0	3	0	6
	Text Production	6	6	0	2	3	1
	Business Administration	18	18	0	2	16	0
Second Level	Text Production	7	7	2	2	1	2
	Book-Keeping and Accounts	10	10	1	1	1	7
Third Level	English for Business (Written)	100	99	61	36	0	2
	Text Production	8	8	4	1	1	2
	Business Administration	34	34	12	14	2	6
	Business Practice	32	32	13	11	6	2
	Certificate in Customer Service	21	20	4	14	2	0
	Selling & Sales Management	18	18	7	9	0	2
	Marketing	19	18	3	6	2	7
	Advertising	14	14	5	3	2	4
	Public Relations	9	9	2	3	3	1
Total		306	302	114	107	39	42

European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) Testing 2009

During 2009, the Examinations Department conducted two ECDL Automated Test sessions which were held in January and July 2009. The January 2009 session was a resit session for those candidates who failed exams in July 2008. There were 3,908 applicants from both Junior Lyceums and Secondary schools (Academic Year 2008/2009) who sat for over 8,000 tests in the various modules.

Results Statistics for January 2009		
<i>Module No</i>	<i>Sat</i>	<i>Passed</i>
Mod 1	72	46
Mod 2	101	76
Mod 3	386	190
Mod 4	411	146
Mod 5	118	64
Mod 6	184	108
Mod 7	229	164
Results Statistics for July 2009		
<i>Module No</i>	<i>Sat</i>	<i>Passed</i>
Mod 1	710	321
Mod 2	727	516
Mod 3	1,516	318
Mod 4	1,442	239
Mod 5	627	284
Mod 6	741	407
Mod 7	1,198	596

AQA (Assessment and Qualifications Alliance) 2008 Examinations

The AQA examinations Board offers subjects at Advanced Level. Examinations are held twice a year.

The January session has the lowest number of entries due to the fact that the subjects offered for this session are limited in number. The June session has the highest number of entries. The total number of entries for January was: Malta - 45; Gozo - 1 while those for June were: Malta - 198; Gozo - 1.

AQA January 2009			
Subjects	Entries	Sat	Pass (A-E)
Pure Mathematics	46	46	38
Total	46	46	38

AQA June 2009			
Subjects	Entries	Sat	Pass (A-E)
Chemistry	13	12	5
Physics	15	10	3
Pure Mathematics	170	166	139
Sociology	1	0	0
Total	199	188	147

Other Foreign Examinations 2009

University/College	Applied	Sat
Birkbeck College – June	1	1
Birkbeck College – May	4	4
Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport – June/July	6	6
CIMA – May	3	3
CIMA – November	5	3
Loughborough University - January	2	2
Loughborough University – June	2	2
Manchester Business School – June	1	1
Manchester Business School November/December	1	1
Nabim University – May	1	1
National Construction College – May	1	1
National Construction College – September	1	1
Professional Examination Service CISA/CISM – Dec	13	13
Professional Examination Service CISA/CISM – June	26	24
The Association of Chartered Certified Accountants - December	724	663
The Association of Chartered Certified Accountants - June	664	612
The British Computer Society – April/May	12	11
The British Computer Society – October	5	5
The Chartered Institute of Purchasing & Supply – May	2	2
The Chartered Institute of Purchasing & Supply – Nov	2	2
The College of Estate Management – August	1	1
The College of Estate Management - December	2	2
The College of Estate Management – February	1	1
The College of Estate Management - November	1	1
The College of Estate Management – September	44	36
The Institute of Internal Auditors – June	1	1
University of Aberdeen – January	2	2
University of Aberdeen – May	2	2
University of Bath	1	0
University of Derby – May	1	1
University of Greenwich - December	14	13
University of Greenwich – January	8	8
University of Greenwich – May	8	8
University of Greenwich – May/June	14	14
University of Leicester – April	1	1
University of Leicester – October	2	2
University of Strathclyde – August	2	2
University of Surrey – April/May	8	8
University of Warwick – December	2	2
Total	1,591	1,463

London Degrees 2009	Applied	Sat
BA English	4	4
BA French	2	2
BA Italian	2	2
BA Philosophy	3	3
BA Spanish & Latin American Studies	1	1
BSc Accounting & Finance	1	1
BSc Business	3	3
BSc Business Administration	2	2
BSc Economics	2	2
BSc Economics & Management	17	17
BSc Geography & Environment	1	1
BSc Information Systems & Management	38	36
BSc International Relations	2	2
BSc Management	3	3
BSc Mathematics and Economics	5	6
Computing & Information Systems/Creative Computing Examinations	212	205
Diploma in Economics	11	11
Diploma in English	1	1
Diploma for Graduates in Management	1	1
Diploma in Social Sciences	20	18
LLM	19	18
Mres in Educational & Social Research	1	1
MSc Agricultural Economics	1	1
MSc Biodiversity Conservation & Management	1	1
MSc Development Finance	1	1
MSc Financial Economics	3	3
MSc Finance (Economic Policy)	3	3
MSc Finance and Financial Law	2	2
MSc Financial Management	2	2
MSc Finance (Financial Sector Management)	1	1
MSc Finance (Quantitative Management)	1	1
MSc Human Resource Management	1	1
MSc Infectious Diseases	2	2
MSc Information Security	9	9
MSc International Management	2	2
MSc Public Policy & Management	1	1
MSc Sustainable Development	1	1
PG Diploma in Banking	1	1
PG Diploma in Public International Law	1	1
PG Certificate Computer & Communications Law	2	2
Total	386	375

LOCAL PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS & LOCAL LICENCES

	<i>Held</i>	<i>Sat</i>	<i>Passed</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
Second Secretaries in the Diplomatic Service	Aug-08	30	11	were in progress in 2009
Officer Cadets in the Armed Forces of Malta	Aug-08	26	15	were in progress in 2009
Armed Forces Regular Soldiers 2008	Oct-08	320	178	were in progress in 2009
Armed Forces Bandsmen 2008	Oct-08	16	5	were in progress in 2009
EFL - Mar 2009	Mar-09	209	115	-----
Engine Drivers Land - May 2009	May-09	14	11	-----
Wireman Licence A - Jul 2009	Jul-09	250	114	-----
Wireman Licence B - Jul 2009	Jul-09	55	31	-----
Messenger in the Malta Public Service	Sep-09	56	39	-----
Engine Drivers Land - Nov 2009	Nov-09	5	3	-----
EFL - Nov 2009	Nov-09	145		still in progress
Clerk in the Malta Public Service	Nov-09			still in progress
Second Secretary in the Diplomatic Service	Dec-09			still in progress

ALFRED ZAFFARESE
Director (Examinations)

Libraries Department

INTRODUCTION

The Department of Libraries consists of the National Library and the Central Public Library together with its Regional and Branch Libraries.

The National Library will continue to acquire, assemble and preserve for posterity the national collections of printed and audio-visual material, as well as material in electronic format.

The Public Library System will provide the public with well-selected and contemporary reading material for both educational and leisure purposes.

NATIONAL LIBRARY

Customer Care

The function of the Customer Care Unit is to register the entry and exit of every person into or from the National Library premises, the aim being to guarantee security as well as to keep records. During 2009 the Unit welcomed a total of 4,692 visitors, a 23% drop from last year, with an average of 16 visitors per day of opening. The majority of visitors hailed from Germany but French and Belgian tourists visited the Library in considerable numbers as well.

Reading Room

Several researchers patronised the Reading Room throughout the year, the majority conducting research in the newspaper collections and others consulting documents from the archives of the Order of St John as well as those of the *Università*. Others still came to trace their relatives or made specific or general queries usually regarding family surnames, genealogy and sports events. Most of these queries were dealt with on the spot by Reading Room staff.

A total of 6,180 persons – an average of 21 per day - used the Library for research purposes, a 1% increase over last year. Reading Room staff fetched an average of 1 item daily per researcher.

In 2009 the Library received 11 new local and foreign scholars who came over personally to conduct research, mainly into the archives of the Order of St John. Others came specifically to consult rare holdings of the library. They presented letters of recommendation from the academic bodies they represented or donated publications of their own in cases where they themselves were heads of University departments or historians in their own right.

A total of 7,189 items were delivered during the year, a 4% increase over the previous year and an average of 24 items per day of opening. Of these, there were 742 manuscripts from the Archives of the Central Administration and of the Treasury of the Order of St John, as well as 19 volumes from the Archives of the *Università* of Mdina and Valletta. A total of 447 volumes from the Library Manuscript collection and 232 from the Adami collection were fetched. As regards printed material, 1,962 Melitensia and reference works were delivered in the Reading Room while 3,787 newspapers were consulted.

Items delivered by the Reading Room Staff during 2009						
	<i>AOM/Treas. Mss</i>	<i>Univ. Mss</i>	<i>Library Mss</i>	<i>Adami Collection Mss</i>	<i>Melitensia/ Reference</i>	<i>Periodicals/ Newspapers</i>
Total	742	19	447	232	1,962	3,787
Total				7,189		

Archives, Manuscripts and Rare Books

The Archives section received 176 electronic and postal enquiries from Europe, the US, Canada and Australia, a 21% increase over last year. As usual, the majority concerned the Archives of the Order of St John or genealogical matters. The bulk of the requests came from Italy and Malta, followed by the UK and France.

Electronic and Postal Enquiries			
Australia	11	Malta	39
Austria	1	Portugal	2
Canada	4	Rumania	1
Cyprus	2	Slovenia	1
Denmark	1	Spain	3
France	20	Sweden	1
Germany	9	UK	29
Italy	40	US	9
Japan	1	Vatican City State	1
Libya	1		
Total		176	

Bibliographic Services Unit

The Legal Deposit Act plays a vital role in the conservation of our national memory, contributing to the steady expansion of the Melitensia collection at the National Library. This Act stipulates that authors or publishers are bound by law to deliver to the National Library two copies free of charge, of any work printed and published in the Maltese Islands. During 2009, 458 distinct books were deposited in total, together with approximately 488 local periodical titles that include journals, newspapers and magazines.

As a supplement to the works received by legal deposit, the Acquisitions Section purchased an extra copy of each title. As always, when it comes to the acquisition of books published abroad, special priority is given to those works published overseas by Maltese nationals, as well as to works manifesting a direct relevance to the Maltese Islands. Several reference works beneficial to the general public were also purchased.

In 2009, the sum spent on books published locally amounted to a total of €2,322.69, while a total of €271.27 was spent on books published abroad. In all, €1,717.81 was spent on subscriptions and memberships to foreign periodicals. In 2009, nine new serial titles were entered into the computer database.

At the beginning of May, the Malta National Bibliography for the years 2005 and 2006, which is compiled by the Bibliographic Services Unit, was published. Predominantly based upon the items received at the National Library by way of legal deposit, the Malta National Bibliography lists new works published in the Maltese Islands during a specific period and describes each one in detail. Each item is catalogued according to the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules and classified by subject according to the rules of the Dewey Decimal Classification System. It is edited, indexed and formatted with the aid of Infor (formerly GEAC) software. By the end of 2009, the cataloguing and classification of bibliographical entries for inclusion in the 2007-2008 edition of the Malta National Bibliography was well underway.

Photocopying/Scanning/Duplication of Microfilms

While the photocopying of manuscripts is strictly forbidden, the photocopying of books is generally discouraged as the process inevitably damages them. Since the Library has most manuscripts and newspapers on microfilm, reproduction of these items is done from the microfilms. With regard to copying both from originals and from microfilms, this year registered a 32% decrease from last year with the intake amounting to the sum of €4,473.

As an alternative to photocopying where no microfilm is available, scanning is advised. This year €1,574 were spent on scanning, a 28% increase over last year's €1,229.

During 2009, the Library also received two orders for the duplication of microfilms from negative to positive. The sum netted from these orders was €70.

Photography

Requests for photography or filming of National Library material were also received from local or foreign journalists who wished to collect information about Malta and its history. Several applied to have photos taken in order to illustrate their publications or because large pages of text could not be photocopied or scanned. In 2009, 36 applications for photography and two for filming were filed, a 14% decrease from the 42 requests in 2008. The income from photography of National Library items amounted to €277.

Restoration/Bindery

The section collates and binds loose material of any nature, mainly newspapers and journals and also rebinds and sometimes restores damaged books or manuscripts which belong to the Library. As usual, the work of bindery staff this year concerned mainly the binding of newspapers and periodicals as well as the restoration of a number of manuscripts and books. They also made portfolios, paperback covers and stickers for the Brocktorff volume published this year.

The bindery staff were also actively involved in the preparation and setting up of the three major exhibitions mounted at the National Library this year. Besides, they helped at the Malta Book Fair by mounting an exhibition at the Mediterranean Conference Centre where the Fair was held this year. They also mounted an important exhibition in Gozo, one at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and two at the Office of the Prime Minister, Auberge de Castille.

As of October, book cleaning began to be systematically undertaken on a regular basis at the National Library where the collections are in dire need of cleaning. The work, which is being carried out by bindery staff, has so far included cleaning of books in the Old Melitensia as well as volumes pertaining to the Archives of the Order of Malta.

The stores at Hal Far where old National Library items are kept were also cleaned out and put in order.

Bindery/Restoration Section - 2009	
Binding of: newspapers and periodicals	94
Books	399
Repairs and restoration of manuscripts	38
Binding of and making of case for Brocktorff publication:	
Portfolios	1,200
Stickers	1,200
Paperbacks	1,200
Presentation boxes	25
Captions for and mounting of exhibitions	8
Book cleaning which started in October	1,769 books
Cleaning of stores at Hal Far	4 days

Sale of Publications

The sale of National Library Exhibitions Catalogues in 2009 yielded an intake of €227, 18% less than 2008. Other income included €21 from the sale of Charles V's Deed of Donation, €37 from the National Library CD-Rom and €288 from the *Giuoco d'Arme dei Sovrani e degli Stati d'Europa*. €2,367 were generated by the sale of copies of the *Malta National Bibliography*, while the income from the sale of postcards amounted to €168. The sale of Brocktorff prints amounted to €290 while the sale of Valletta/Valencia maps yielded an intake of €40.

Exhibitions

During the year, the National Library organised or contributed to no less than eight exhibitions on the premises or in other venues.

In February, the Rabat Local Council together with the Wignacourt Museum set up an exhibition to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the death of Mro Francesco Azopardi (1748-1809). The exhibition, which was mounted at the Wignacourt Museum, Rabat, ran from February till March 2009 and included books, manuscripts and artifacts relating to this outstanding Maltese composer. The Library lent three manuscripts, three volumes related to music and a historical dictionary of musicians dated 1810 from its Melitensia collection.

In March, another exhibition was organised, this time by Heritage Malta, entitled *Reflections on Pauline Theology* to commemorate the Pauline Year. For this exhibition, held between 17 March and 30 April, the National Library loaned to Heritage Malta two library manuscripts and four books from its Melitensia collection.

The same premises hosted another important exhibition inaugurated in June 2009. The National Library contributed by loaning three historical plans of Valletta.

On the occasion of World Book Day, 23 April 2009, the Ministry for Gozo, together with the National Library of Malta, organised an exhibition entitled *Treasures of Gozo at the National Library of Malta*. The display consisted of over fifty items relating to Gozo from the National Library's various collections, ranging from the watercolour reproduction of Majmuna's tombstone to the four manuscript volumes of poems by Anton Buttigieg. The exhibition ran till the Notte Gozitana on 24 May and was then mounted at the National Library to be enjoyed by the many visitors and researchers who call at the Library. On the occasion of the Notte Bianca on 3 October, a good sample of the display was mounted at the Auberge de Castille.

Another contribution was given to an exhibition entitled *La Puglia dei Cavalieri* mounted in Bari, Italy, in September 2009. Photos taken from seven *Cabrei* from the Archives of the Order of St John were blown up and displayed during such exhibition. An article by Ms Maroma Camilleri was included in the exhibition catalogue.

In October, another exhibition entitled *Arts, Crafts and Melitensia* was held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. For this exhibition the National Library loaned seven books written by Maltese ex-Ambassadors or members of the Diplomatic Corps.

The 21st of November saw the inauguration of a major exhibition entitled *Ad Perpetuam Memoriam: The Archives of the Order of St John 1107-1798* at the National Library on the occasion of the International CITRA Conference for Archivists organised by the National Archives of Malta between 17 and 20 November. This exhibition provided a general overview of the almost millennial history of the Order displaying charters documenting its origins as a hospital in the Latin East and its growth as a military Order to combat the rise of Islam culminating in the Great Siege of Malta in 1565. Later documents on display highlighted events that occurred during the 268-year tenure of the Order in Malta, as well as

important works carried out by the more prominent Grand Masters in Malta. On display were not only documents from the Archives but also books, manuscripts, maps and plans from the Library collections which served to complement and illustrate persons and events that figure in the interesting but dry, administrative archival documents. The exhibition, which was accompanied by a detailed catalogue, was visited by many locals and foreigners.

On 26 November, on the occasion of the visit to Malta by His Majesty King Juan Carlos of Spain, an exhibition was mounted at the Auberge de Castille, consisting of a selection of eight important Spanish documents and four books from the National Library collections.

Malta Book Fair 2009

In November, the Department of Libraries together with the National Book Council, organised the 25th edition of the Malta Book Fair at the Mediterranean Conference Centre. There was a slight increase in exhibitors participating in this year's Book Fair. Public attendance was very encouraging. Activities such as book launching, discussions and reading sessions were organised during the five days the Fair was on. Three main exhibitions were mounted, namely *Poetry and Monuments*, *Foreign Literature translated into Maltese*, and *Drama in Books*.

The Department also set up its own stand during the Fair, divided between the National Library and the Central Public Library. Visitors were given the opportunity to learn more about the National Library's treasures and also about services offered by the Central Public Library.

All logistical organisation was made by National Library personnel.

Participation in Conferences Abroad

2nd LIBER-EBLIDA Workshop on the Digitisation of Library Material in Europe, The Hague, The Netherlands, 19-21 October 2009

The Senior Assistant Librarian attended a three-day conference organised by LIBER-EBLIDA in the Dutch capital. The event brought together representatives from 27 national and university libraries and commercial entities across and outside Europe to discuss the way forward for the digitization of library material in Europe. The themes of relevant metadata standards, public-private partnerships, user needs and aggregation and cross-domain aspects were brought to the attention of all participants.

Repairs and Maintenance

The work at the maintenance workshop included the day-to-day maintenance and carpentry works of the Department. New shelving units were manufactured and installed as follows: 6 at the Paola Local Council-Regional Library and 19 at the Cospicua Local Council-Branch Library.

Restoration Works at the façade of the National Library

During the year, employees from the Restoration Unit continued with the restoration work entrusted to them on the façade of the National Library as well as its portico.

Brocktorff Watercolours of Malta Collection

The second and final volume of the Brocktorff watercolours was launched on 27 February 2009. The book, authored by Theresa Vella, treated Brocktorff's 42 watercolours showing the buildings of Valletta, mainly St John's Co-Cathedral, the Palace, the Library as well as a number of open air views of Valletta and the Grand Harbour. The author gives a stylistic analysis of the paintings, while placing them in their

art historical context. Their documentary value is also discussed, as a historic viewpoint of the most significant historic buildings in Malta. This volume, of which 1,200 copies were printed, proved just as successful as its predecessor. The photography and printing of the book were once more entrusted to the Department of Information and to the Government Printing Press.

Seminar for National Library Employees

On 29 October, the National Library organised a one-day seminar for its employees. All members of staff coming from different sections attended the seminar which was held at the Carmelite Convent, Mdina. For the day, the National Library was closed to the public. Present for the seminar and taking active part was the Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Education. The seminar centred on the situation of the National Library, its work, systems and methods, new initiatives and other issues, all aiming at consolidating and enhancing the services offered by the Library.

Notte Bianca – Lejl Imdawwal Valletta 2009

The 4th edition of Notte Bianca was organised on 3 October 2009. The National Library once again participated in the event and the Library opened to the public from 7.00 pm till midnight. Information regarding the history, scope and services of the National Library were given throughout the whole evening to the thousands that visited the place.

Digitisation Strategy and Framework for the National Library of Malta

The National Library of Malta succeeded in procuring European Regional Development Funds (ERDF) in order to establish a framework to digitise part of its collections, ensuring preservation of the original material. The main activities comprise: planning of the project down to the least detail, issuing of tender for the purchase of the equipment, the actual purchase and installation of the equipment and the training of staff regarding the digitization process. The services of an IT/Digitisation Specialist were procured in order to ensure the successful implementation of the project within the stipulated timeframes and costs. A tender for the purchase and installation of digitising equipment has been designed to be launched in January 2010. A tender for the purchase of the relative software was also drafted. In the meantime the former Microfilming Room at the National Library was cleared and is being refurbished to house the new Digitisation Studio.

Donation of Records of the Għaqda Letterarja Maltija

When the Għaqda Letterarja Maltija was dissolved in 2009, its Council donated the records to the National Library. The material consisted of the minutes of the organisation's various general meetings, agendas, correspondence, circulars, membership details dated back to 1956. Other documentation included various competitions organised within the primary and secondary school children by the organisation such as *Konkors Novelli* from 1965-1999, *Pinna Żagħżuġha* dated back to 1955 and *Konkors Poeżiji*. One can also find various manuscripts like *Merġat* and *Ġebbla fuq Ġebbla* and various newspapers cuttings, copies of periodicals like *Forum* and *Antoloġija*. These items were catalogued and placed in acid-free boxes.

CENTRAL PUBLIC LIBRARY

Public Libraries Network

The Central Public Library, together with the following Regional and Branch Libraries, were all operational during 2009. These are the Regional Libraries of Birkirkara, Luqa, Mosta, Paola, Qormi, Rabat and Vittoriosa and the Branch Libraries of Attard, Birżebbuġa, Cospicua, Dingli, Fgura, Għargħur, Għaxaq, Gudja, Gzira, Hamrun, Kalkara, Kirkop, Lija, Marsascale, Marsaxlokk, Mellieħa, Mgarr, Mqabba, Msida, Naxxar, Pembroke, Qormi (St George), Qrendi, Safi, St Julians, St Paul's Bay, San

Ġwann, Senglea, Siggiewi, Sliema, Tarxien, Valletta, Żabbar, Żebbuġ, Żejtun and Żurrieq. Besides these libraries there is also the hospital library of Zammit Clapp which is still functioning and rendering service to its patients and staff. In Gozo the public library scenario includes the Gozo lending library with its eleven branch libraries namely those located in Ghajnsielem, Gharb, Ghasri, Kerċem, Nadur, Qala, San Lawrenz, Sannat, Xaghra, Xewkija and Żebbuġ and a hospital library that is housed in the Gozo General Hospital.

The services rendered at the Central Public Library can be classified into two main categories namely those pertaining to 'front desk' routines such as the Adult, Junior, Reference, Melitensia, Audio visual library and People with Special Needs and the others that provide and prepare the necessary material to be offered to the public namely the Acquisition, Cataloguing and Bindery Sections. With these, can be added the Area Libraries Support Unit which caters for all the Regional and Branch Libraries.

The Tarxien Branch Library became operational in June 2009. The other two Branch Libraries pertaining to Marsa and Sta Venera are still closed.

Information Technology Support

It is planned to computerise the remaining 16 Branch Libraries (located at Fgura, Kalkara, Kirkop, Lija, Marsa, Marsascala, Marsaxlokk, Pembroke, Qrendi, Rabat, Safi, St Julians, Sta Venera, Senglea, Tarxien, Valletta and Vittoriosa) in 2010. This final stage of the computerisation project will eventually connect all the Regional and Branch Libraries in Malta to a unified active catalogue that can help people in getting an enhanced service. Already much of the work related to inputting of data has been going on in parallel with that of the previous libraries that were computerised. This has saved a remarkable amount of time in getting the job done in less time.

Customer Care Unit

The Customer Care Unit which acts as a focal point for information to the public has also the responsibility of enrolling new members to make use of the library. In its schedule of duties it has also incorporated the training of new branch librarians and is involved directly in the coordination of books being dispatched to libraries forming part of the outreach services. Moreover, the Unit was instrumental in assisting parents with their children who have a reading problem or who are not that keen to read books. Various ways were identified and individual appointments were made with both parent and child so that together the right method was found to attract the child to the book.

During the year, a number of library orientation visits were organised by the Customer Care Unit. Besides these visits, various talks on library operations were delivered in schools and local councils stressing the point of the importance of reading especially at an early age. Also details were given on how persons could enrol as members of the library.

The Customer Care Unit acts also as the guardian of the Quality Service Charter ensuring that responsibilities undertaken by the Central Public Library are adhered to scrupulously without fail. Feedback by customers is recorded in a log book and trail of correspondence is kept up to date and filed accordingly. From this year renewal of books by customers on the telephone is being carried out by the Unit. This practice has facilitated the easy process for customers to renew their books over the phone especially when counters are busy with the incoming public.

The number of new members enrolled during 2009 was 2,400 juniors and 1,878 adults totalling in all 4,278 new members. The following list shows a breakdown of new members by locality:

Library Membership								
Locality	Juniors	Adults	Total	Locality	Juniors	Adults	Total	
Attard	58	48	106	Mqabba	134	29	163	
Balzan/Lija	34	35	69	Msida/Pieta'/Ta' Xbiex	52	59	111	
Birkirkara/Mrieħel	119	126	245	Naxxar	67	56	123	
Birżebbuġa	82	31	113	Paola	52	30	82	
Cospicua	15	20	35	Qormi	92	42	134	
Dingli	21	14	35	Qrendi	28	12	40	
Fgura	50	59	109	Rabat/Mdina	78	71	149	
Floriana	10	12	22	Safi	12	7	19	
Għargħur	42	12	54	St Julians/Kappara/St Andrews/Swieqi	92	104	196	
Għaxaq	40	23	63	St Paul's Bay/Buġibba	147	78	225	
Gudja	11	18	29	Sta Venera/Fleur De Lys	34	27	61	
Gżira	77	56	133	San Ġwann	62	53	115	
Hamrun	41	52	93	Senglea	5	10	15	
Kalkara	38	43	81	Siġġiewi	51	36	87	
Kirkop	22	3	25	Sliema	41	80	121	
Luqa	24	24	48	Tarxien/Sta Lucia	78	50	128	
Marsa	10	16	26	Valletta	9	18	27	
Marsascalea	93	67	160	Vittoriosa	13	27	40	
Marsaxlokk	27	28	55	Żabbar	135	90	225	
Mellieħa	19	17	36	Żebbuġ	83	33	116	
Mġarr	59	17	76	Żejtun	74	63	137	
Mosta	120	127	247	Żurrieq	49	55	104	

Juniors	2,400	Adults	1,878
Total		4,278	

Number of members enrolled per month					
January	386	May	248	September	395
February	285	June	248	October	318
March	263	July	481	November	483
April	330	August	410	December	411
Total		4,278			

Services to People with Special Needs

Six volunteers come regularly to the Central Public Library and read books to be recorded for people with special needs. About 184 hours (30 hours more than in 2008) of recording took place in the Sound and Vision Studio, facilitating the completion of 19 newly read books.

For persons with a hearing impairment the section has for lending 130 sub-titled videos and 65 DVDs to be watched at the Central Public Library premises. Complementary to this at the Multimedia Library secondary school, students who have a reading impairment can easily book for an appointment to make use of a 69 CD ROMs collection.

During the year, 20,009 tape-cassettes forming up 4,805 titles were loaned to people who are visually impaired, illiterate, persons with a disability, dyslexic and old-age people. 451 new tape-cassettes were recorded at the Sound & Vision Studio managed by the Section. This number brings the total of all the collection to over 31,598 tape-cassettes. At present there are 480 members making use of this sterling service. The following are the number of titles in the under mentioned different subjects:

Subject	No. of Titles
Biographies	200
Maltese Drama	278
Maltese Novels and Short Stories	582
Short Stories in English	1,024
English Drama	352
Non-fiction (various)	674
Music	1,552
Religion	805
Stories in Maltese for children	81
Stories in English for children	260
Junior non-fiction	14
Children's music	23
Total	5,845

Audio-visual library

The material found in this section is complementary to the books as information not found in print can be retrieved by exploring sites on the internet. In fact this valuable tool has been many a time a readily accessible service to our visitors especially students. Internet users have increased since last year while videos and DVD's are very popular with our clientele. CDs are also listened to especially by persons who want to learn a language for the first time in their life. During the year the WIFI project was launched and now members of the public coming to the library with their laptop can connect to internet service. Moreover, the same computers reserved for internet service have been connected through WIFI.

Reference and the Melitensia libraries

These two libraries have been very busy during the year especially the Melitensia Library where students come to the library to search for information that they require to compile their projects. Readily accessible information is prepared at the Melitensia Library and customers appreciate not having to search for irrelevant information. Personnel at the reference section assisted a good number of students who came to the section in search of clues to solve questions posed to them with the aim of introducing them to methods of research.

Area Libraries Support Unit

As contemplated during the end of 2008, the transfer of the Msida Branch from Achille Ferris Primary School to the Msida Local Council began in January 2009 with arrangements being made to solve the problem of connectivity. Until this was in place, an appraisal of the existing book stock was taken into consideration and old stock was withdrawn and discarded from circulation. This helped in rejuvenating the collections while the Msida Local Council brought in new books and others collected as donation. The Msida Branch was up and running again in June 2009.

Various visits to the Regional and Branch Libraries were carried out as required during which collections were inspected and updated accordingly. The possibility of acquiring another adjacent room for the Luqa Regional Library, as the present room has become small for the collection of books, is still open to consideration by the Head of School. The same situation is relevant with regard to the Mosta Regional Library room, which now has become small to hold all the number of books available. Discussions with the pertinent authorities have started with the intention of acquiring more space within the Civic Council building where the library is already located.

The Gudja and Mosta Library Sub-committees are still functioning and meetings are held to discuss issues concerning the libraries themselves.

The total book stock in the Regional and Branch Libraries at the end of 2008 totalled 403,709 books, an increase of 22,140 books over the previous year, after taking into consideration those books that were withdrawn and discarded from the collections, which total 2,094.

Cooperation Agreements with Local Councils

2009 saw the Department of Libraries continuing its work and cooperation with local councils, with the aim of improving the services offered in regional and branch libraries in our towns and villages. While work was done to strengthen these services in libraries where a cooperation agreement already exist, a further three Cooperation Agreements were signed in 2009, namely those of Marsaxlokk (24.04.2009), Kirkop (29.05.2009), and Paola (06.08.2009), thus bringing the total of signed cooperation agreements between the Department and local councils to 50.

Book stock, book donations and loans

€7,182 were spent on the purchase of new material for 2009. From this amount, 631 new publications were purchased for the sections of the Central Public Library; 576 for the Regional and Branch Libraries. The number of books donated by the public and other bodies to be used in the Central Public Library, the Regional and Branch Libraries amounts to 24,322 (increase of 2,209 books over 2008) which is divided into: 729 for the sections of the Central Public Library and 23,593 for the Regional and Branch Libraries.

The number of lost and paid books during the year is 14, those lost and replaced 61, while the number of books weeded from the collections at the Central Public Library was 1,444.

The Central Public Library has got standing orders for the following publications: local - Sacra Militia, Treasures of Malta, Saghtar, Heritage Malta, Malta at War and Delitti u misteri series; foreign - Automobile Yearly, Guinness World Records, Stanley Gibbons Stamp Catalogues, Guardian International Film Guide, Writer's Handbook and Whitaker's Almanac.

The total number of book loans issued by the Central Public Library including the Regional and Branch Libraries and the Gozo Lending Library with its Branch Libraries totalled 754,634, as shown in the following table:

Number of Books on loan issued by the Central Public Library and Regional/Branch Libraries- 2009				
Central Public Library	No of loans		Branch Libraries (Malta)(cont)	No of loans
Adult Library	132,770		Mġarr	5,313
Junior Library	78,467		Żurrieq	4,928
Total Central Public Library	211,237		Gzira	4,808
			Żebbuġ	4,485
Regional Libraries	No of loans		Dingli	4,441
Birkirkara	59,213		Qormi (St George)	4,273
Luqa	33,563		Safi	3,891
Paola	29,354		Mqabba	3,529
Qormi (St Sebastian)	27,450		Pembroke	3,377
Mosta	27,084		Kalkara	3,258
Rabat	10,735		Senglea	2,528
Vittoriosa	3,271		St Julians	1,154
Total Regional Libraries	190,670		Msida	1,067
			Cospicua	954
Branch Libraries (Malta)	No of loans		Tarxien	778
Fgura	17,562		Valletta	267
Żabbar	14,480		Zammit Clapp Hospital	109
Żejtun	14,021		Total Branch Libraries (Malta)	233,713
Marsaxlokk	13,236			
Attard	12,341		Branch Libraries (Gozo)	No of loans
Siggiewi	11,208		Nadur	19,588
Sliema	9,604		Qala	7,719

Naxxar	9,380	Xaghra	7,655
Marsascala	8,847	Ghajnsielem	5,584
Mellieha	8,075	Sannat	5,083
Hamrun	7,831	Żebbuġ	4,123
Qrendi	7,820	Gharb	3,736
Gudja	7,299	San Lawrenz	3,613
Lija	7,127	Xewkija	1,710
San Ġwann	6,550	Ghasri	1,444
Ghaxaq	6,538	Kerċem	715
St Paul's Bay	5,906	Gozo General Hospital	230
Gharghur	5,756	Total Branch Libraries (Gozo)	61,230
Kirkop	5,611	Total Gozo Lending Library	57,784
Birżebbuġa	5,361		
Grand Total 754,634			

A number of students following a diploma course in librarianship visited the Central Public Library as part of their course schedule. They were informed about the type of services being rendered to the public and shown around the premises to see the collections set-up. When it was time for them to leave the building, students gave very positive feedback.

JOANNE SCIBERRAS
Senior Principal

Directorate for Lifelong Learning

The Directorate for Lifelong Learning (DLLL) was set up in June 2009. The mission is to design a national strategy in lifelong learning; bring about coordination in this sector by making optimal use of the diverse learning providers and settings which characterises lifelong learning systems; lift the barriers for participation, so that the overall volume of participation in adult learning is increased, and to address the imbalances in participation in order to achieve a more equitable state of affairs; ensure the quality of adult learning; and encourage more adults in active citizenship.

ADULT LEARNING UNIT

The Adult Learning Unit is responsible for Evening Classes, Adult Literacy Courses, the Lifelong Learning Centre and the visual and performing arts schools.

Adult Learning

As one of the leading providers of Adult Education in Malta and Gozo, the Adult Learning Unit is offering 445 courses in Malta and 121 courses in Gozo, which started during the last quarter of 2009. These courses vary in type and depth and in the comprehensive number of learners attending evening and adult classes.

Adult courses (mainly evening classes) at various Centres, in Malta and Gozo

These are made up of the traditional evening class format of one-and-a-half hour lessons twice weekly. For the 2009-2010 courses, the number of adult learners registered with the Adult Education Unit attending the Evening Classes courses is 3,706. The following table provides statistics on the age and gender of attendees.

Evening Courses						
Age Groups	11-20yrs	21-30yrs	31-40yrs	41-50yrs	51-60yrs	60+yrs
Male	124	189	141	119	108	230
Female	251	523	378	381	504	758
Total	375	712	519	500	612	988

The prospectus published for the current academic year 2009-2010 included for the first time the course description, key competence area, contact hours, method of assessment, course requirements and recommended texts for most courses.

Ensuring Quality and Standard in Adult Learning

An Education Officer (EO) specialising in Adult Education was assigned to the DLLL. Through the services of the EO, emphasis was laid on the upgrade of the quality and standards of both service provision and service providers while identifying strengths and weaknesses in this sector, thus recommending a number of strategies to improve adult learning in Malta and Gozo.

A detailed job description for Adult Basic Skills Educators was formulated. For the first time all adult basic skills educators were interviewed. 101 applications were received to teach one or more of the Basic Skills Subject (Maths, English and Maltese) to adults. 57 teachers were selected by the end of August 2009.

A 5-hour pre-service training programme was designed and implemented with the Adult Basic Skills Educators during September. The training programme was based on a new tool created by the EO in connection with the Adult Education Needs Assessment (AENA) whereby Adult Educators learned how to apply this continual process tool which takes place throughout the Adult Basic Skills Courses.

Another 6-hour mid-service training programme was designed and implemented. Adult Educators reviewed the AENA and reflected on how to meet the specific learning goals of the Adult Learners; this was followed by examples of good practice in teaching the four receptive skills in teaching a language. The DLLL invested in resources, including Teacher's Books, DVDs and audio CDs related to the teaching of English to Adults.

Detailed interview and recruitment criteria were also developed for the posts of Evening Classes Coordinators, for the post of full-time teachers at the Lifelong Learning Centre and for the post of Officer in Charge of the Lifelong Learning Centre.

Professional Staff Development and Training

In order to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the teaching personnel within the DLLL, during 2009 a number of in-service training and staff development sessions were conducted.

A whole day training seminar was organised at the Gozo School of Arts for all Officers in Charge of the Malta and Gozo Schools of Arts, Drama and Music and the Lifelong Learning Centre. The training focused on the National Qualification Framework (NQF) and its impact on the adult learning sector. It was agreed that by the end of academic year 2010-2011, all adult courses offered at these schools would be in line with the NQF. For this purpose a template of a course description was provided so that all adult educators engaged within the visual and performing arts schools and the Lifelong Learning Centre would eventually design their respective courses according to the criteria established between the Malta Qualifications Council and the DLLL. Further professional staff development and training is planned with each respective school.

Adult Basic Skills Courses in collaboration with Local Councils (LC)

During 2009, Adult Basic Skills courses took place in partnership with 18 local councils which accepted the invitation by the DLLL. The subjects offered were Mathematics, English, Maltese, Science and Technology – all at NQF Level 1 (basic level). However the response was only for Maltese and English at basic level. The following table shows the number of local councils and the subject /s offered:

Local Councils	Subject/s offered
Hamrun LC	Malti NQF level 1 English NQF level 1
Dingli LC	Malti NQF level 1 English NQF level 1
Fgura LC	English NQF level 1
Gżira LC	Malti NQF level 1 English NQF level 1
Haz-Zebbuġ LC	English NQF level 1
Iklin LC	English NQF level 1
Kalkara LC	English NQF level 1
Mellieha LC	Maltese for Foreigners
Mtarfa LC	English NQF level 1
Naxxar LC	English NQF level 1
Qormi LC	English NQF level 1
Rabat (Malta) LC	English NQF level 1
Sannat LC	English NQF level 1
Siggiewi LC	Malti NQF level 1 English NQF level 1
Tarxien LC	Malti NQF level 1 English NQF level 1
Żabbar LC	Malti NQF level 1 English NQF level 1
Żejtun L C (Paulo Freire)	Malti NQF level 1 English NQF level 1
Żurrieq LC	English NQF level 1

Adult Basic Skills Courses held at the Evening Classes Centres

Besides reaching out at a local level, the DLLL offers Adult Basic Skills Courses in its Evening Classes Centres, namely in Paola, B'Kara (Ta' Paris), Blata l-Bajda, Mosta, and another course at Qormi (San George) Parish Centre. The table below shows the Evening Classes Centres and the subjects offered:

Evening Classes Centre	Subject/s offered
B' Bajda	Malti NQF level 1 English NQF level 1 Maths NQF level 1
B'Kara (Ta' Paris)	Malti NQF level 1 English NQF level 1
Mosta	Maltese for Foreigners
Paola	Malti NQF level 1 English NQF level 1
Qormi (parish)	Malti NQF level 1

The table below shows the number of fixed and regular adult learners who are attending the Adult Basic Skills Courses at NQF level 1, during the academic year starting October 2009 in the 4 Basic Skills subjects offered in 2009:

Subject	Males	Females	Total
Maths	4	5	9
English	101	179	280
Maltese	49	67	116
Science & Technology	-	-	-

Courses for Non-Maltese

Non-Maltese adults residing in Malta continued to show interest in learning English as a Foreign Language and Maltese for Foreigners.

The following table below shows the venues of these courses, the levels (whether the learners are at the Beginners stage, the Intermediate stage or at an Advance stage) and the number of adult learners regularly attending such courses.

Subject & level	Venue	No. of Adult Learners	
		Males	Females
Maltese for Foreigners (Beginners)	Blata l-Bajda (Maria Regina)	9	18
Maltese for Foreigners (Beginners)	Mosta (Girls' Sec)	4	7
Maltese for Foreigners (Beginners)	Mellicha (Local Council)	7	16
Maltese for Foreigners (Intermediate)	Blata l-Bajda (Maria Regina)	6	27
Maltese for Foreigners (Intermediate)	Mellicha (Local Council)	4	1
Maltese for Foreigners (Intermediate)	Mosta (Girls' Sec)	3	6
English for Foreigners (Beginners)	Blata l-Bajda (Maria Regina)	22	32
English for Foreigners (Intermediate)	Blata l-Bajda (Maria Regina)	7	17
English for Foreigners (Advance)	Blata l-Bajda (Maria Regina)	18	17

Links with MQC

Bilateral talks between the Malta Qualifications Council (MQC) and the DLLL were established in order to produce policy documents according to the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) where courses provided by the Directorate will be in line with the NQF.

A number of meetings between the MQC and the Directorate are organised so that Adult Basic Skills courses which commenced in October 2009 will attain Level One of the NQF and all successful adult learners will be entitled to acquire this partial certificate approved by the MQC.

MQC approved four courses at NQF level 1. It is envisaged that by early 2010 all teaching staff will be provided with training and support on the impact of the NQF on the adult learning sector and assist teachers and schools in providing course descriptions in-line with the framework.

Adult Special Classes

The Adult Learning Unit is coordinating the teaching for adults in the following Centres as well.

Centre	Subjects	Learners
St Mary Community, Luqa (Sedqa)	Gardening, Basic Maltese, Basic English, Basic Maths	23 in all
Villa St Anna, Bahar iċ-Ċagħaq (Caritas)	Basic English, Basic Maltese	12 in all
FITA	Basic Skills in Computer	9
Downs Group	Basic Skills in Computer	8
Dar is-Sliem	Basic English	35
National Council of Women	Computer Awareness	8
	ECDL	37
	Computer Upgrade	12
	Basic English	20
	Basic Maltese	13

Lifelong Learning Centre

The number of adult learners attending learning sessions in the last quarter of 2009 was 113 males and 430 females.

Lifelong Learning Centre						
Age Groups	11-20yrs	21-30yrs	31-40yrs	41-50yrs	51-60yrs	60+yrs
Male	6	8	7	4	18	70
Female	5	35	64	83	88	155
Total	11	43	71	87	106	225

The subjects taught were Computer, English, Empowerment, Everyday Science/Health and Safety, French, German, Italian, Maltese, Mathematics, Parenting Skills for Grandparents, Spanish, Thinking Skills. The levels ranged from Basic to Intermediate.

At the Lifelong Learning Centre, the priority is that quality education is provided. Also, the process has already been initiated for an expansion of the number of subjects offered at the Lifelong Learning Centre at different times to the extent that learning sessions will eventually be offered at the Centre from morning till late evening.

As of October 2009, the Lifelong Learning Centre is being administered for the first time by a full-time teacher.

Teaching of ECDL

During 2009 the Adult Learning Unit ran courses in ECDL Core, Advanced and Web Starter. These courses were attended by hundreds of students, many of whom sit for ECDL tests in our ECDL Approved Test Centre. The Centre organised Test sessions on four various occasions during the year, namely April, June, September and December. Students normally sit for different modules ranging from one to seven tests. The following are some tests statistics:

ECDL CORE						
Session	No of Candidates	No. of Tests	Passes	Failures	No of tests not attended for	Percent Pass
April	179	477	426	44	7	91%
June	188	375	339	36	0	90%
September	37	95	70	14	11	83%
December	201	499	400	68	31	85%

The Centre also caters for candidates with special needs with various disabilities, ranging from visually impaired to wheelchair bound persons. These students are all coming from Foundation for Information Technology Accessibility (FITA). These tests are conducted on a one to one basis during the year. The students apply for special needs accommodation such as extra time, reader, special equipment, separate testing room and such other facilities. These facilities are granted by ECDL Malta. The centre is equipped with special software and other facilities to cater for these candidates. The results obtained by them are 100% passes as the students are very well prepared. This process is organised throughout the year, whenever the students feel ready to take the tests.

For ECDL Advanced, four independent tests are held, covering Database, Presentation, Spreadsheets and Word Processing. During 2009 several courses were held and at the end of each course tests were organised with the following statistics:

Session	Candidates/ Tests	Database	Presentation	Spreadsheet	Word processing	Pass	Fail
March	53	2	26	24	1	47	6
June	43	23	8	12	0	42	1
September	5	2	1	1	1	4	1
December	51	7	1	14	29	46	5

The above also includes a number of students coming from the Lifelong Learning Centre attending courses on Friday mornings and subsequently sitting for tests.

In October 2009 the Adult Learning Unit started courses in ECDL Webstarter. The course was attended by 12 students, nine of whom sat for the test in December and all of whom obtained passes.

Schools of Visual and Performing Arts

The Directorate for Lifelong Learning is responsible for the School of Art, the Mikelang Borg Drama Centre and the Johann Strauss School of Music in Malta; as well as the School of Art, School of Music and the Drama Centre in Gozo.

During the year, 3,413 were registered and attending the six schools of visual and performing arts. Apart from the vast range of courses in expressive and creative subjects, these schools organise various cultural initiatives and events.

On the setting up of the Directorate, an initiative was taken to network these schools and work on projects collaboratively. Two meetings for the officers in charge of these schools were held during 2009. All schools are working to bring their courses in line with the NQF framework.

School of Art, Malta

The School of Art is offering 11 courses. The creative process in Fine Arts is the prerogative of the courses offered. The study skills of investigation, documentation, experimentation, realisation and aesthetic awareness determine this process. Learners attending these courses attain these competencies through the visual elements, processes and procedures and practices in Fine Arts.

Learners are also provided with the opportunity of studying and working from the life model, under the tutorship and supervision of their respective tutors.

453 persons are attending the School of Art during the academic year 2009-2010. The following table show the distribution of attendees by gender and age.

School of Art, Malta						
Age Group	11-20yrs	21-30yrs	31-40yrs	41-50yrs	51-60yrs	61+yrs
Male	15	24	30	32	40	90
Female	21	45	25	35	47	49
Total	36	69	55	67	87	139

Throughout the year, the School of Art offered its services and facilities to other entities so as to cooperate in the artistic and cultural enrichment on a national scale. A case in point is the loan of paintings/sculptures/etchings from the School of Art collection so as to be exhibited in exhibitions on a national scale.

With the introduction of the 'new Aesthetic Project work' in the Systems of Knowledge at 6th form level, students from the Junior College, Giovanni Curmi Higher Sec, and St Aloysius' College are enrolling at the School of Art to work on their Aesthetic and Technology Projects. Students from the BEd (Hons) Art come for their practical hands-on sessions and make use of the studio facilities at the School of Art.

The School and the students took an active part in activities organised by the Malta Cultural Institute, in commemoration of Europe Day, World Children's Day, during the 'Open Day' at the Malta Restoration Centre at Bighi, organised by Heritage Malta and during *Notte Bianca* organised by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport.

The Graduation and Prize Giving ceremony at the Malta School of Art was held in May. Apart from the usual exam prizes, other special prizes for outstanding achievement, progress and participation were awarded. An exhibition of course-work projects was put up at the School of Art as part of the Prize Day with all the students attending the school exhibiting at least one of their works.

During the summer of 2009, on the initiative of the School Council, the School of Art organised a Summer Art Enrichment Activity for those wishing to participate in creative experiences. This activity was held on Tuesdays and Thursdays, mornings and evenings, during the months of July, August and September for a total of forty hours. Learners from the age of eight were allowed to participate in this activity. 100 persons applied for this activity. Ten tutors were engaged to hold these activities.

The School organised an Open Day in August. The general public had the opportunity to visit the studios where various evening courses are held. These include Drawing and Painting, Life classes, 3D work in Plasticine, Plaster and Clay (including Mould making), Sculpture in Wood and Stone, Artistic Print Making, Gold and Silversmithing, and Gilding. Artistic Creativity Courses were also held in the morning. In the lecture Hall, where History of Art lectures are usually held, visitors could view works by pre-1950 ex-students. The Minister of Education, Culture, Youth, and Sport, Hon Ms Dolores Cristina visited the Open Day.

Throughout the year, the School organised lectures for students and the general public in the Lecture Hall. Two of these very well attended lectures were on *Primitivism in Modern Art* by Dr Louis Lagana' and *The Development of British and Maltese Sculpture 1950-2008*.

The School of Art continued to enrich the school's library service by investing heavily in art books. The School's Library now has well over 1000 lending Art books. There is a reference section for research.

School of Art, Gozo

The Gozo Centre for Art and Crafts (Gozo School of Art) offered courses to 1,115 participants during 2009. 65 Courses are offered at the Centre. These are divided into eight main categories: Fine Art; Art Juniors; Crafts Juniors; Art and Design; Crafts; Art for persons with Special needs; Design and Crafts techniques to Secondary Schools students in the age group of 14 and 15; and Trade courses for ETC clients. The following table shows the distribution of attendees by gender and age.

School of Art, Gozo						
Age Group	0-10yrs	11-14yrs	15-24yrs	25-39yrs	40-59yrs	60+yrs
Male	48	11	55	52	74	43
Female	36	28	84	115	321	248
Total	84	39	139	167	395	291

The Centre introduced the following courses during 2009: the Sugar Craft Course, Flower Arrangement Course, Modelling Course, The Eco-Recycler and an online course. With regard to the Flower Arrangement course, the process of composing flowers starts by sowing seeds at the Centre and following their growth from germination. With regard to the Modelling course, the support of a sponsor for beauty products was given, thus limiting the expenses.

Apart from participants who follow the courses, the Centre has provided art courses for special needs' participants. Eight participants attended art courses, performed in a specially equipped hall, fitted with ramps, adequate furniture and the required sanitary facilities housed in the same hall. The same hall is used for the Modelling Course. Nine participants who needed support in socialisation and emotional expression were integrated in normal art and craft courses to improve their self esteem.

As part of a project in conjunction with the Ninu Cremona Lyceum Complex and Agius De Soldanis Girls' Secondary School, students from these schools attend for courses in Design and Craft techniques. As of February 2009, courses in woodwork, welding, metal works and stained glass conducted by the Centre's teaching staff, were offered to ETC clients following agreements between the Centre, the Corporation and the Ministry for Gozo. The Centre's Conference Hall, Computer Lab and other classrooms were used for training sessions by ETC lecturers. These sessions varied from Advanced ECDL to Job Search Seminars, Food Handling and Private Guard Refresher Course. The total number of trained students amounted to 700.

The two main programmes on which the Centre had previously embarked proceeded during 2009. The Centre urged participants to use recycled material and biodegradable material for the production of artefacts. The Centre was selected by BEW Germany to convey the BLES program for ECO Science, as a Lifelong Learning Centre in Gozo. BLES adopts the concept of eco-science regarding biodegradable material. The aim of this project is to create and evaluate a training level, which is uniform in other European countries. The final result expected to be achieved is that all participants in each partner country has the same knowledge and awareness of handling and managing organic waste. 24 participants achieved good results following assessments in respect of the BLES online Eco Science Course.

Another programme undertaken by the Centre is the project entitled *Lace – wealth for the rich, blessing for the poor* through the Leonardo da Vinci Programme. The Centre hosted an International European Lace Conference in March. 28 representatives from partner European countries (Belgium, Italy, Germany, Spain and Slovenia) joined lace teachers and students from the Centre. The project is mainly focusing on the design and pattern making of local lace by CAD, a colour code system used in Europe and America but which is still new to the Maltese Islands.

Each year, the need to shift the approach from a traditional school of art to a more contemporary one was being felt. The Centre is aiming for a more advanced achievement by the participants. This idea is being implemented during scholastic year 2009-2010, with the Centre going through a process to improve all courses to a standard NQF recognised, as requested by DLLL.

Participants enrolled at this Centre were offered the possibility to promote their works during ongoing exhibitions both locally and abroad. The Centre's main event is the Annual School Exhibition held at the Exhibition hall within the Ministry for Gozo. This year's event was held in June.

During 2009, the Centre participated in two events abroad. One of the events was held in Bobowa, Poland during the 10th International Festival of Bobbin Laces where promotion was given to local lace and silver filigree. The second event took place in Temse, Belgium. Art and Papier Maché works were featured during an exhibition. The Papier Maché teacher at the Centre gave a talk on this technique.

The Centre's young participants took part in the World Children's Day and *Notte Bianca*. The Centre's teaching staff helped the Arka Respite Centre during a fund raising marathon held in April.

An ambitious goal has been reached with the completion of the extension to the premises and the underlying incubation centre.

This year, the Centre gave tribute to the artist Wistin Camilleri on the 30th anniversary of his death. A monument figuring the artist was inaugurated at the entrance of the Centre. The Hon Ms Giovanna Debono, Minister for Gozo unveiled the monument and it was blessed by Bishop Mario Grech. During the same event a set of crucifixes, produced at the Centre and which will be shortly displayed in the classrooms, were blessed by the Bishop.

A new puppet show was also inaugurated. The mobile theatre was commissioned by the Gozo College and custom-made by the teachers of the Centre. The theatre is to be handed over to the Gozo College which in turn is to perform shows in schools around Gozo.

Mikelaᅡ Borg Drama Centre, Malta

Mikelaᅡ Borg Drama Centre offered courses to 454 students in Mainstream Acting, Musical Theatre, Ballet, Flamenco, Contemporary Dance, Modelling, Personality Development, Community Theatre, Outreach programmes and Costume Design.

During 2009, the school successfully prepared students for the International Certificate in Drama of the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art (LAMDA) and the LAMDA Diploma in Performing Arts. Ballet and dance students entered the Royal Academy of Dance (RAD) graded examinations, the Alianza Flamenca and the Teachers of Dance (UK) certificate examinations. The Centre actively involved students and tutors in Socrates/Grundtvig projects with performances in Greece and Italy and workshops in Austria, Romania and Italy.

The Centre presented Sarah Kane's "4.48 *Psychosis*" at the Manoel Theatre and produced a televised docudrama which was exported to foreign partners. A German crew filmed another documentary about the Centre to be screened in Hamburg while a troupe of senior dance students presented public open air shows in Sliema, Pembroke, Qormi and Valletta as part of the Centre's Outreach programme.

The following tables show the distribution of learners according to age groups and gender and the results obtained by students attending Mikelaᅡ Borg Drama Centre:

Mikelaᅡ Borg Drama Centre 2009							
<i>Age Group</i>	<i>0-10yrs</i>	<i>11-20yrs</i>	<i>21-30yrs</i>	<i>31-40yrs</i>	<i>41-50yrs</i>	<i>51-60yrs</i>	<i>61+yrs</i>
Male	46	33	7	0	0	0	0
Female	169	142	34	13	7	2	1
Total	215	175	41	13	7	2	1

	LAMDA	RAD	TC (UK)	FLAMENCO
Distinction	86%	14%	100%	100%
Merit	14%	79%		
Pass		7%		

School of Drama, Gozo

The Gozo School of Drama organised courses at various levels in Drama, History of the Theatre, Theatre Appreciation and Criticism, Classical Ballet, Ballroom and Latin American Dance, Movement and Aerobics.

The number of students attending the school in 2009 was 371. During this year, the school successfully prepared students for the LAMDA)Certificate in Solo Acting in various grades. It was also successful in preparing its Ballet students for the Royal Academy of Dance graded examinations. School of Drama students were successful in both international examination sessions.

During 2009, the School of Drama held its End -of-Year Celebration Concert in May and its students performed in various activities organised by other organisations.

School of Drama, Gozo						
<i>Age Group</i>	<i>0-10yrs</i>	<i>11-14yrs</i>	<i>15-24yrs</i>	<i>25-39yrs</i>	<i>40-59yrs</i>	<i>60+yrs</i>
Male	20	8	8	0	4	3
Female	222	56	24	5	18	3
Total	242	64	32	5	22	6

Johann Strauss School of Music, Malta

The Johann Strauss School of Music offers tuition to 555 students in theory and harmony, flute, clarinet, saxophone, trumpet, althorn, tuba, violin, violoncello, classical guitar, bass guitar, jazz improvisation, piano, voice and piano accordion. It also has its own youth choir, a wind band, a clarinet choir, a flute choir and an orchestra. The following is the distribution of learners according to age groups and gender.

Johann Strauss School of Music						
Age Group	0-10yrs	11-14yrs	15-24yrs	25-39yrs	40-59yrs	60+yrs
Male	128	61	54	16	15	3
Female	111	81	55	19	7	5
Total	239	142	109	35	22	8

During 2009, the School participated in the following activities:

Date	Genre	Venue
January	Concert by Johann Strauss Saxophone Quartet	Sala Isouard – Lunchtime concert
	Monthly Lecture Series - Speaker: Mr Joe Vella	The School's waiting room
February	Concert by Johann Strauss School of Music Brass ensemble for Jum iz-Żabbar	Żabbar
March	Concert by the Johann Strauss Clarinet Ensemble	St John's Co-Cathedral Valletta
	Concert by the Johann Strauss Saxophone Quartet	St. Johns' Co-Cathedral Valletta
	Concert by the Harp and Piano students	The School's waiting room
	Monthly Lecture Series - Speaker: Ms Rosetta Debattista	The School's waiting room
April	Concert by piano and flute students	The School's waiting room
	Easter concert by students of all the teachers of the school	The School's waiting room
	Prize Day	Manoel Theatre Foyer
May	Vocal concert as part of final exam	Palazzo de la Salle
	Instrumental workshop for prep classes	School Yard
	Monthly Lecture Series - Speaker: Dr Philip Ciantar	School waiting room
	Vocal concert	St Catherine of Italy Church - Valletta
	Concert by advanced piano students	Manoel Theatre Foyer
June	Vocal concert	Sacristies Vaults – Valletta Waterfront
	Vocal concert	Sacristies Vaults – Valletta Waterfront
July	Concert by the SGS Touring choir to the school together with Johann Strauss School of Music Youth choir	The School yard
October	Monthly Lecture Series - Speaker: Mr Michael Ciantar	The School's waiting room
November	Concert by clarinet students	The School's waiting room
	Concert by clarinet students	St James Cavalier Centre for Creativity
	Concert for the World Childrens' Day	The Palace Valletta
December	Christmas concert by students of all the teachers	The School waiting room
	Christmas concert by the Youth Choir	The President's Palace at San Anton Attard in the presence of Mrs. Abela

School of Music, Gozo

The Gozo School of Music offers Musical Education to students from the age of 5.

During 2009 the school provided individual tuition to students in pianoforte, violin, cello, modern and bass guitar, flute, clarinet, saxophone, trumpet, drum kit and voice. All these students also attended theory lessons which cover the theoretical aspects of music, history and appreciation of music and aural and solfeggio sessions. Students between the age of 5 and 8 attend a two-year course in Basic Music, a course which focuses on aural training and music making in an atmosphere of fun and play.

The table below refers to students attending the Gozo School of Music for the various courses available during first term scholastic year 2009/2010:

School of Music, Gozo							
Age Group	0- 10Yrs	11-20yrs	21-30yrs	31-40yrs	41-50yrs	51-60yrs	60+yrs
Male	139	75	12	3	2	4	5
Female	122	73	13	4	8	2	3
Total	261	148	25	7	10	6	8

Various activities were organised by the Gozo School of Music. A Parents' Week was held during which parents could attend their children's lessons and discuss their progress with the respective teachers.

Various instrumental recitals were held while the annual Prize Giving Ceremony was held in May. Students attended master classes. A Saxophone Student participated in one of the concerts organised by the Victoria International Arts Festival.

An informative session for Prep II students was held. During this session, entitled '*Introduction to the Instruments*' the children (7 – 8 year olds) together with their parents were introduced to the various instruments available at the school with a short explanation and demonstration of each instrument.

The Christmas Concert was organised in the Main Hall of the Ministry for Gozo. Various students studying different instruments and at different levels participated. A string ensemble made up of students both from the Gozo School of Music and the Johann Strauss School of Music took part. During the concert the school launched its publication 'The Buzz' which the school aims to publish every term.

Representing Malta on the Working Group on Adult Learning Action Plan (EU)

Adult learning is increasingly seen as an important education and training sector, with its own variety and dynamism. There is now an ever-growing discussion about ways to increase the participation of adults in education and training during their life time. It is important that adults continue to learn to develop and up-skill their competences to meet the challenges of demographic change, Europe's role in the global economy, a sustainable society, and to invest in their own personal development.

The Commission has called on Member States to promote adult learning and to place it firmly on the political agenda by adopting in 2006 the Communication on adult learning *It is never too late to learn*, followed by the Communication in 2007 on the adult learning Action plan *It is always a good time to learn*. Both Communications have been reinforced by Conclusions of the Council in 2008.

The Action Plan aims to help remove the barriers that prevent adults from engaging in learning activities, and to improve the quality and efficiency of the adult learning sector. It complements this with a call to ensure adequate levels of investment in, and better monitoring of, the adult learning sector. The adult learning sector embraces all forms of learning undertaken by adults after having left initial education and training, however far this process may have gone in formal, non-formal and informal settings.

The Commission has established a Working Group to provide and support the Commission's services with policy advice and assistance in implementing the Action plan. The activities of the Group are therefore be guided by the actions set out in the Action Plan itself and the actions proposed in the Council Conclusions and the Resolution of the European Parliament. The participants represent the Member States, the EETA/EFTA countries, European Social partners and European Association in adult learning. Malta is being represented by the Education Officer (Adult Education) within the DLLL.

One of the key activities of the Working Group is to give regular updates on policy developments in their respective countries. Their reports are used to identify good practices, to analyse trends and to formulate recommendations.

SCHOLARSHIP UNIT

The Directorate for Lifelong Learning is responsible for three scholarship schemes:

- Strategic Educational Pathways Scholarships (STEPS)
- Malta Government Scholarship Scheme (MGSS)
- Commonwealth Scholarships

A graduation ceremony for scholarship awardees of STEPS (first two calls) and MGSS (Postgraduate) was held in October, under the patronage of the Hon Prime Minister, Dr Lawrence Gonzi.

Strategic Educational Pathways Scholarships (STEPS)

The STEPS scheme was launched in January 2009. The scheme offers bursaries to address areas of national priority as identified within the Operational Programme II – *Empowering People for more Jobs and a Better Quality of Life* – for the implementation of Cohesion Policy in Malta for the period 2007-2013 and is co-funded by the European Social Fund (ESF).

The Scheme provides scholarships which address four focus areas under the first priority axis of this programme. The four focus areas are:

- Capacity building in the education system;
- Addressing skills mismatches;
- Research and Innovation in Science and Technology
- Information and Communication Technology.

Three calls were issued during 2009: First Call: 29 January – 6 March; Second Call: 1 May – 15 June; and Third Call: 1 November – 15 January, 2010.

For the First Call, a total of 148 applications were received, of which 73 were deemed as ineligible. The following table shows the distribution of scholarships per priority area.

STEPS – First Call		
	Doctoral	Masters
Capacity Building in Education	2	10
Addressing Skills Mismatches	8	20
Research and Innovation in Science and Technology	6	6
Information and Communications Technology	N/A	7

For the Second Call, a total of 296 applications were received, of which 78 were deemed ineligible. The following table shows the distribution of scholarships per priority area.

STEPS – Second Call		
	Doctoral	Masters
Capacity Building in Education	4	17
Addressing Skills Mismatches	1	39
Research and Innovation in Science and Technology	16	31
Information and Communications Technology	N/A	13

Malta Government Scholarship Scheme (MGSS)

The scheme offers two categories of scholarships: Postgraduate and Undergraduate.

The Postgraduate Call was issued in June and had the following key objectives:

- assist exceptional students to pursue further levels of academic research;
- encourage and promote more student participation at a postgraduate level of academic research, both locally and internationally;
- contribute towards research in identified areas of national priority;
- increase research at the University of Malta;
- increase the capacity and level of research, innovation and development activity in Malta.

Applications for Doctoral programmes on a distance learning modality were accepted for the first time. The following table lists some statistics relevant to Doctoral and Masters programmes under the MGSS Postgraduate scheme for 2009:

MGSS – Postgraduate 2009			
	Applications	Withdrawn	Awarded
Doctoral	42	4	32
Masters	41	16	15

During 2009, a call for Undergraduate scholarships under the MGSS scheme was issued in August. The following table lists relevant statistics.

MGSS – Undergraduate 2009		
Applications	Withdrawn	Awarded
171	1	109

Commonwealth Scholarships

The Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the United Kingdom has again invited Malta to nominate a number of candidates who are interested to pursue 12 – 36 months of either a full time taught or a doctoral post graduate qualification or a 12 months' non-degree study in the UK on a Split-Site basis to aid the completion of a doctoral degree undertaken at a University in the home country.

In October, DLLL issued a call under this Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan. Our of five applications received, one was withdrawn and two were recommended. The two recommended applicants still have to undergo the screening process by the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission and therefore are not automatically entitled for the scholarship.

MARIO AZZOPARDI
Director (Lifelong Learning)

Corporate Services Directorate

The Directorate of Corporate Services provides support services and advice to the Permanent Secretary and to directorates, departments and organisations/entities within the Ministry on issues related to financial planning and management, procurement, human resources management and office management. The Department coordinates activities of a corporate nature and seeks to achieve uniformity in implementing policy directives issued by the Office of the Prime Minister and the Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Investment as well as by the Ministry itself.

The Department is organised into six branches: Finance (Ministry), Support Services, Human Resources, Financial Services (Education Directorates), Procurement and Administration and Precincts Management.

FINANCE (MINISTRY)

During 2009, the Finance Section of the Ministry continued to provide assistance to the Director of Corporate Services and to the Permanent Secretary with regard to financial management.

Monthly revised estimates were prepared in respect of recurrent and capital expenditure in order to keep financial commitments on track and to take corrective action in cases where allocated funds were not sufficient. Continuous liaison was maintained with the Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Investment by means of financial management reports. Also, appropriate action was taken to pre-empt, reduce or collect over payments when they arise.

The Section also monitored the revenue and expenditure of all entities within the Ministry's portfolio and recommended to the Budget Office the release of funds required for their efficient and effective operation.

The Finance Section contributed towards the drafting of the 2010 financial estimates of the Ministry. Business Plans submitted by departments and entities falling under the Ministry were analysed and a holistic document was drawn up for the Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Investment.

During the year, the Section devised new reporting mechanisms to facilitate the gathering of information necessary for the preparation of reports. Action was also taken to address issues raised by the National Audit Office and by other Bodies. A new database was designed for more accurate reporting and to assist in the collection of arrears of revenue.

Other work carried out included the preparation of Accrual Accounting returns on a quarterly basis, the preparation of draft replies to parliamentary questions, and the preparation and submission of other information requested by the Office of the Prime Minister, the Budget Office, the Treasury and the National Audit Office.

Financial control measures undertaken in 2009 included the implementation of the Fleet Management System and the identification and de-activation of unused telephone lines.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Support services within the Department of Corporate Services consist mainly of the administration of Students' Maintenance Grants and travel arrangements for officers proceeding abroad on official duty.

- The *Students' Maintenance Grants Section (SMGS)* was responsible for the remuneration of students entitled to a Maintenance Grant, for the issue of swipe cards to post secondary school students and for payments to retailers for purchases made through swipe cards. The Section also administered stipends issued to students who were awarded a scholarship under the Malta Government Scholarships Scheme.
- During the summer, the SMGS received and verified applications for a maintenance grant submitted by new students. It also coordinated the placement of students with various organisations for work carried out during the summer holidays.
- The *Travel Abroad Unit* prepared documents required by the Ministry's and the Education Directorates' delegates to travel abroad to participate in conferences and meetings. In this regard, 232 visits were made during 2009. It was also responsible for follow-up procedures on the delegates' return. Such procedures included the presentation of relative documents to the Treasury and the submission of claims for reimbursements to the Ministry of Finance, in respect of expenses incurred for travel related to the European Commission and Council.

HUMAN RESOURCES

During 2009, the Human Resources (HR) Branch, which is made up of the Records, Employee Relations, Resourcing and Discipline Sections, continued to provide support and advice to the Director of Corporate Services, to the Permanent Secretary, the Directors General, and directors of all line departments to ensure that policies, procedures and relevant legislation were adhered to in matters relating to HR. The Branch provided information as requested by central government.

Three calls for applications were issued for the recruitment of part-time Clerks and one call was issued for Casual Substitute Clerks. The HR Branch also circulated 150 circulars ministry-wide.

The HR Branch in conjunction with the Department of Curriculum Management and e-Learning organised a course leading to the European Computer Driving Licence Word Advanced. A member of the DCS is attending the Diploma Course in Public Administration at the University of Malta and another officer attended a DAS (Departmental Accounting System) course. Also, staff from the Section attended work-related or self development courses organised by the Staff Development Organisation and a course in Financial Management and Control was organised for all staff.

The Department adhered to the established guidelines concerning the retention policy for HR documents in line with the Data Protection Act including sick leave certificates, vacation leave application forms, written warnings and other documents related to disciplinary cases.

Records Section

The Records Section carried out the following activities:

- preparation of letters of appointment of new recruits and promoted officers;
- processing of 221 confirmation of appointments and 2,238 increments of employees within the Education Directorates;
- preparation of pension documents of 197 retiring employees, 92 of who were also entitled to a Treasury pension;
- preparation of letters of progression in respect of 395 employees;
- processing the re-designation of 56 Instructors as Teachers;
- updating of all changes in personal records and appointment details of the staff, including the personal record sheets, the various seniority lists and allowances database;
- any necessary action with MPO, the National Audit Office, the Public Service Commission and the Employment and Training Corporation (ETC) in respect of employees who terminated their employment in 2009;

- processing of requests for 87 qualification allowances and a number of other allowances, such as the all-inclusive and acting Head of School allowances,
- drawing up of the service and leave record sheets to applicants applying under various calls for applications.

Employee Relations Section

The Employee Relations Section:

- maintained an electronic and manual record of vacation, sick and special leave availed of by Ministry and the Directorates' staff, including part-time staff;
- processed requests for special leave, including parental, maternity, responsibility leave, pre-retirement, sports, alternative employment, unpaid study leave, vocational and cultural leave, as well as requests for reduced hours;
- liaised with the Salaries Section in respect of pay and allowances deductions;
- administered and processed reports regarding injuries at work; nine injury boards were set up to investigate cases of injury on duty;
- made administrative arrangements for the setting up of medical boards regarding employees on prolonged sick leave;
- provided statistics and data requested in-house or in relation to PQs, as well as by central government departments..

Resourcing Section

The Resourcing Section:

- processed a total of 654 cases of progression/promotions and 57 assimilations of staff as provided in the respective Classification and Regrading Agreements of the different classes and grades;
- submitted monthly employment returns to the ETC and MPO;
- administered the Performance Management Programme for the general service grades;
- referred 450 new employees for the required medical examinations;
- regularly updated the Human Resources Information Management System database;
- submitted to the relevant authorities weekly returns of staff engagements, transfers to and from other departments, superannuations and resignations within the Directorates.

Discipline Section

In terms of Regulation 20 of the Public Service Commission (Disciplinary Procedure) Regulations, 1999, 55 disciplinary cases (27 Minor & 28 Serious) were processed. Out of 134 cases reported, in terms of Regulation 19, 23 written warnings were given. 7 cases were dealt with in accordance with Regulation 36.

In 35 cases, salary deductions were made in terms of the Public Service Management Code, when employees were found absent from place of work without permission.

In terms of Regulation 14, six criminal cases were concluded and 14 other cases are still pending a Court judgement. These cases include violence, fraud, and possession of pornographic material, amongst others and may necessitate the initiation of suspension, interdiction or dismissal.

FINANCIAL SERVICES (DIRECTORATES)

The Financial Services Branch is responsible for the provision of financial services to the Directorates, state schools and other outstations and the issuing of all payments for goods and services procured by the Directorates. It also implements monitoring and control mechanisms as necessary to keep the Education Directorates' finances in line with government financial regulations.

The Branch is made up of the Accounts Section and the Efficiency and Strategic Operations Planning Unit (ESOPU). The Branch is mainly responsible for the evaluation of the Directorates' three-year Business and Financial Plans and their compilation into a single document consistent with Government's policies and programmes. This document formed the basis of discussions with the Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Investment (MFEI) for the 2010 Estimates.

Regular monitoring of Votes and Items of expenditure, both of a recurrent and capital nature, was carried out during the year and reports were submitted on a monthly basis to senior management for control purposes, indicating corrective action where expenditure was expected to exceed the budgetary allocation.

Imprest funds for Capital Expenditure, Materials and Supplies, and Repairs and Maintenance were allocated to schools and monitored by means of an appropriate reporting mechanism in accordance with Government Financial and Procurement Regulations. Schools submitted reports on the expenditure incurred on these items for monitoring purposes. These reports were checked and any discrepancies were remedied with the respective Head of school.

The Branch was responsible for the drafting, compilation and issuing of all departmental tenders and quotations related to capital expenditure including quotations issued for the purchase of IT equipment through the e-procurement system. The amount of €657,703 was spent on IT equipment in schools, whilst €1,043,129 was spent on the purchasing of equipment and furniture for schools (including Special Schools).

The Financial Service Branch continued to compile statistical data for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Overseas Development Assistance), MFEI, the National Audit Office and for the National Statistics Office.

PROCUREMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

Procurement Section

- Processed 45 departmental tenders, two Contracts Department tenders and eight sealed and other quotations. The procurement of textbooks to state schools involved the processing of 23 departmental tenders and five sealed quotations, for a total expenditure of €950,000; 12 departmental tenders were issued for the running of tuck-shops in state secondary schools/junior lyceums.
- Processed a total of 1,757 requisition forms from the various sections of the Directorates for the procurement of goods and services. The corresponding local purchase orders were drawn up and the relative invoices settled within the established payment period.

Registry Section

A reorganisation exercise began in 2009 to amalgamate two registry sections into one and this should be implemented in 2010. The Registry in 2009:

- processed an average of 300 files daily;
- opened 2,003 new files, of which 231 were personal files in respect of non-state schools staff, 1,012 in respect of staff in state schools and 760 general files;
- processed 3,282 registered letters and 75,854 letters (ordinary and foreign mail);
- registered 870 internal circulars in the Docreg system and updated the mail, transfers and general files databases on a regular basis.

Minor Staff Section

- Deployed minor staff, monitored their attendance and checked the level of cleanliness in schools and Head Office; additional personnel provided by MPO were posted on cleaning and other duties in schools.

- As part of ongoing supervision of the attendance of minor staff in schools, carried surprise inspections and as a result 32 minor staff were subjected to disciplinary action and deduction in pay.

Stores Section

- Distributed 118,800 textbooks to state schools in Malta and Gozo.
- Supervised the distribution of 20,400 copies of Lo Stivale to secondary schools/junior lyceums and 24,000 copies of the environmental booklet *SWITCH* to primary/secondary state, private and church schools.
- Issued a total of 70 summer uniforms and 83 winter uniforms to entitled personnel within the Directorates;
- Processed 850 requisitions for stores, including stationery and cleaning material.
- Maintained updated the Section's computerised database.

Transport Section

- Was responsible for providing transport services to the Ministry, the Education Directorates and other entities (a total of 1,733 requests for transport were received throughout the year).
- Provided regular transport for school outings, Skolasajf, youth exchanges programmes, in-service courses and officers travelling to Gozo on official duties; provided eight lifter vans to the special schools, two vans to Unit Għożża, and three buses to schools at Kalkara, Tarxien and Birkirkara.
- A total sum of €7,700.44 was received as nominal fee charged for fuel expenses in connection with school outings.
- Supervised and processed the issue of petrol entitlements to users of 63 official vehicles.
- Ensured that vehicles were given adequate maintenance and underwent VRT tests, as stipulated by ADT.

Inventory Section

- Provided continuous support to the directorates, departments and schools to update their inventory database in line with the Inventory Accrual Accounting System.
- Carried out 20 inspections in schools to check inventory updates.
- Submitted every six months to the National Audit Office and the Treasury Department the updated inventory general database and continued the process of labelling of permanent inventory items.
- Implemented additional security measures in state schools in order to protect public property and reduce the possibility of thefts.

Electronic Servicing Unit

This Unit is responsible for repairing electronic equipment, TV sets, hi-fi and PA systems owned by the Ministry, Directorates and schools. Expertise from this Unit were utilised in Boards of Surveys appointed to report on obsolete electronic equipment and to recommend their disposal.

PRECINCTS MANAGEMENT

The Technical Services Branch, which was in operation until 11 October, was responsible for carrying out various works in schools as explained in the table below:

Trade	Members of staff in the trade	Requisitions for works submitted	Jobs carried out	Jobs in hand
Aluminium works	3	15	13	2
Carpentry works	15	120	73	47
Drainage works	7	325	295	30
Drivers works	5	193	193	Nil
Masonry works	17	102	80	22
Membrane works	4	54	38	16
Welding and Iron works	13	126	114	12
Plastering & Painting works	22	93	75	18

On 12 October 2009, the Precincts Management Unit was set up and replaced the previous Technical Services Branch. This Unit assumed responsibility for new projects undertaken by the Ministry and Educational Directorates.

Projects initiated by this section in 2009 include the restoration of the ex-Hairdressing School in Sliema into a Youth Agency, Marsaxlokk Hostel, Villa Psaigon and Casa Leone St Venera. Works carried out by this Unit is explained in further detail in the below table.

Trade	Members of Staff in the trade	Requisitions for works submitted	Jobs carried out	Jobs in hand
Aluminium works	1	15	13	2
Carpentry works	3	17	14	3
Drainage works	2	7	7	Nil
Drivers works	1	57	57	Nil
Masonry works	4	4	3	1
Membrane works	2	7	6	1
Welding and Iron works	2	15	14	1
Plastering & Painting works	3	8	8	Nil
Electricians work	2	14	19	2
Plumbers work	2	7	6	1
Gardeners work	5	14	13	1

ANDRE' VASSALLO GRANT
Director (Corporate Services)

Information Management Unit

Mission Statement

Responsible for the development, implementation and management of the ICT in the Ministry of Education, Youth and Employment under the direction of the Permanent Secretary and the Chief Information Officer for the Public Service.

MAIN PROJECTS

Award of Divestment Tender

Megabyte Co Ltd were awarded the Divestment Tender. The Company entered into a five-year agreement with Education to maintain its systems and applications and to provide a new Examinations Management System.

The Company successfully took over, from MITA, the maintenance and support of the Students Teachers Schools system. They also completed the Requirements Analysis for the new Examinations Management System. The document was accepted by the Examinations Department.

Schools Library Service Software

The IMU managed the User Acceptance Testing on the Schools Library Service system. The testing proper was undertaken by SLS support staff. The SLS will now enter into a service level agreement with the Suppliers and launch the system in a number of pilot schools.

PC Leasing

The IMU managed the PC leasing process for all the administrative units falling under the Ministry except those in schools. The IMU carried out a spot-check on all Units in order to ensure that only the correct number of computers actually required would be leased. The exercise had to be carried in view of the various changes in the Ministry's structure.

PC Leasing Damages and Repairs

The IMU and the DSRM established a policy with MITA for the regulation of repairs to damaged computers or their replacement.

This was an ongoing process that generated a hefty number of reports in view of the vast numbers of machines leased to the whole Ministry.

SMS Messaging

The IMU worked with MITA to make available the SMS facility to schools in order to allow them to contact parents. A pilot was launched in Sta Tereza College, which started using the facility in order to notify parents of their child's absence. This meant that they would be informed of their absence on the same day it happened.

National Archives Website

The IMU assisted the National Archives in the commissioning of their website as provided by SEASUS. The Project Management was undertaken by MITA.

Policies and Standards

The IMU monitored ministry-wide compliance to Government ICT policies and standards. New policies or amendments to policies were communicated to staff via their respective directors.

Waivers and Exemptions

MITA established a formal mechanism to facilitate the application process for waivers and/or exemptions to standards and policies. The IMU took it upon itself to draft the requests as a means of assisting the departments requesting such service. A register of the requests and MITA's decisions was kept for reference purposes.

Procurement of Hardware and Software

Hardware and software was procured by the Unit for all the departments and some of the agencies falling under the Ministry. Where applicable, the IMU used the eProcurement facility.

User Accounts

The Unit maintained a database of all User Accounts provided to Ministry staff and applied for new ones via the Electronic Request for Service facility. It closed the accounts of persons who had retired or, as required, of others who were transferred outside the Ministry.

A new policy was introduced during 2009 on how passwords and user names were communicated to users in line with MITA's tighter security.

Assistance to Entities

Small entities that did not have their own ICT Support Unit were assisted on various matters. These included the Television Station E22, the Malta Council for Culture and the Arts, Heritage Malta and the Institute for Tourism Studies.

Networks

Various requests for Network Consultancy were channelled to MITA via the IMU. The Unit ensured that MITA approved of the proposed changes.

EDWARD J CARUANA
Chief Information Officer

Directorate for European Union and International Affairs

EUROPEAN UNION AFFAIRS

INTRODUCTION

This directorate covered a large number of issues and was involved in the preparation of a considerable number of meetings held during 2009. Documentation was prepared for five Ministerial meetings which tackled issues relating to education, culture, youth and sport. The directorate presented 16 background notes, 39 speaking notes, 27 briefing notes and 76 instruction notes to the EU Secretariat at the Office of the Prime Minister for use by Ministerial delegations and Maltese representatives attending Council meetings. There were 18 explanatory memoranda submitted to the Inter-Ministerial Committee for European Union Affairs. The list of these memoranda appears further down in an appended table.

The directorate helped the Malta-EU Steering and Action Committee (MEUSAC) in the organisation of the MEUSAC Education, Youth & Culture Sectoral Committees held on 3 April and 24 June. During these meetings, the documents from the European Commission on 'An updated strategic framework for European cooperation in Education and Training'; 'New skills for new jobs'; 'A new partnership for the modernisation of universities: the EU forum for university business dialogue' and 'An EU Strategy for Youth – Investing and Empowering, A renewed open method of coordination to address youth challenges and opportunities' were discussed.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The directorate was involved in the preparation and documentation for the visits of the previous European Commissioner for Education, Training and Culture, Mr Jan Figel on 25-27 February. A number of dossiers were approved at three Education, Youth and Culture (EYC) Council Meetings held at Ministerial level on 16 February, 11-12 May and 26-27 November. The directorate prepared the documentation for two Ministerial meetings held at informal level on 22-23 March and 23-24 September.

The dossiers approved by the Council meetings included the Key messages to the Spring European Council in the field of education and training; Enhancing partnerships between education and training institutions and social partners, including employers, in the context of lifelong learning; Strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training ("ET 2020"); Professional development of teachers and school leaders; Education of children with a migrant background, wherein Malta made reference to its inclusion policy in place at all levels and it provides for additional and individual support for students according to their needs, which helps students to integrate in schools and would naturally also help them to progress further in their studies; Messages from the EYC Council in the field of education as a contribution to the discussion on the post-2010 Lisbon Strategy; Developing the role of education in a fully-functioning knowledge triangle; Diversity and transparency - drivers for excellence in European higher education; "New Skills for New Jobs : anticipating and matching labour market and skills needs"; the reform of the European Schools; and the Implementation of the Education and Training 2010 work programme: 2010 joint interim report of the Council and the Commission.

The directorate organised a number of meetings with the Director for Lifelong Learning to assemble together the feedback obtained from Heads of departments and entities on the European Commission's

questionnaire found in the Green Paper on Promoting the learning mobility of young people. The questionnaire was submitted to the Commission duly filled in October.

Youth and Sport

Several youth topics were addressed by both Council Presidencies during 2009. During the EYC Council meeting of May, held during the Czech Presidency, there was the adoption of the ‘Council Conclusions on the evaluation of the current framework for European cooperation in the youth field and on future perspectives for the renewed framework.’ On 27 April, the European Commission published the Communication ‘An EU Strategy for Youth – Investing and Empowering, A renewed open method of coordination to address youth challenges and opportunities’ which served as the basis for the ‘Council Resolution on a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018)’. The latter was adopted in the EYC Council meeting in November during the Swedish Presidency.

With the coming into force of the Lisbon Treaty on 1 December, the field of sport is expected to receive a great impetus. This Directorate gave sport its due importance and attention. Documentation was prepared for: two Sport Directors meetings held on 28-29 April and 1-2 October; the 4th and 5th Member State Working Group meetings on the White Paper on Sport held on 31 March and 9 September; and the 4th meeting of the EU Working Group on Non-profit sport organisations held on 2 April. On aspects concerning gaming, feedback was sought from the Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Investment (MFEI). To this effect, a meeting was held on 4 November with representatives of MFEI, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport (MEDC), the Malta Sports Council (KMS) and the Lotteries and Gaming Authority (LGA). This Directorate also coordinated the compilation of two questionnaires related to sport, namely the Questionnaire on Relationship between the State and Professional Sport and the Questionnaire on the Promotion of Volunteering in Sport.

Culture and Audiovisual

The dossiers approved by the EYC (Education, Youth and Culture) Council meetings included Council Conclusions on Culture as a Catalyst for Creativity and Innovation; Council Decision on the European Capital of Culture events for 2012 and 2013; Council Conclusions on media literacy in the digital environment; Council Conclusions on promoting a creative generation - developing the creativity and innovative capacity of children and young people through cultural expression and access to culture, as well as the nomination by the Council of two members of the European Capital of Culture selection panel and the monitoring and advisory panel for the period 2010-2012. A number of additional important issues were discussed both within the Council Working Groups and during the Council meetings, be they as policy debate items, as points of information from the Commission, or as Any Other Business items. These included the digitisation of cultural content in Europe, the issue relating to Google Books and Creative Content Online.

Participation in the Council Work Plan for Culture 2008-2010 has proceeded with Malta’s representatives participating and contributing to the Expert Groups on the following themes: Synergies between Art and Education; Culture and Creative Industries; and Mobility of Collections. The Maltese representative on the Expert Group on the Mobility of Artists has been substituted following the redeployment of the originally appointed expert to another Ministry.

Legislative and non-legislative items presented to the Inter-Ministerial Committee, and later approved by Cabinet and the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Foreign and EU Affairs	
COM (2008) 423	Green Paper on Migration and mobility: challenges and opportunities for EU education systems
COM (2008) 337	Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the Final Evaluation of the Community's action programme to promote bodies active at European level and support specific activities in the field of Education and Training
COM (2008) 680	Report from the Commission to the Council on the Council Resolution of 23 November 2007 on Modernising Universities for Europe's competitiveness in a global knowledge economy
COM (2008) 234	Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the implementation of the

	Community action programme to promote bodies active at European level in the field of Culture
COM (2008) 868	Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: New Skills for New Jobs – Anticipating and matching labour market and skills needs
COM (2008) 638	Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions Implementation of the Barcelona objectives concerning childcare facilities for pre-school-age children
COM (2008) 892	Proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing an Audio Visual cooperation programme with third countries MEDIA MUNDUS
COM (2008) 865	Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions “An updated strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training”
COM (2009) 158	Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - A new partnership for the modernisation of universities: the EU forum for university business dialogue
COM (2009) 159	Report from the European Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - Final report on the implementation and impact of the second phase (2000-2006) of the Community action programmes in the field of education (Socrates) and vocational training (Leonardo da Vinci) and the multiannual programme (2004-2006) for the effective integration of information and communication technologies (ICT) in education and training systems in Europe (eLearning)
COM (2008) 245	Final Evaluation Report on the Implementation and the results of the MEDIA Plus and MEDIA Training (2001-2006) programmes
COM (2009) 200	Communication from the commission to the council, the European parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - An EU Strategy for Youth – Investing and Empowering. A renewed open method of coordination to address youth challenges and opportunities
COM (2009) 329	Memorandum on the Green Paper on “Promoting the learning mobility of young people”
COM (2009) 462	Memorandum on the Proposal for a Council Decision on the signing and provisional application of an Agreement between the European Commission and the Swiss Confederation establishing the terms and conditions for the participation of the Swiss Confederation in the ‘Youth in Action’ programme and in the action programme in the field of lifelong learning (2007-2013)
COM (2009) 487	Report from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. Report on progress in quality assurance in higher education
COM (2009) 598	Memorandum on the Report from the Commission to the European Parliament on the functioning of the European School System in 2008
COM (2009) 640	Memorandum on the Communication from the commission to the European Parliament, the council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - Key competences for a changing world - Draft 2010 joint progress report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the “Education & Training 2010 work programme”
COM (2008) 207	Memorandum on the Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions –the protection of consumers, in particular minors, in respect of the use of video games

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Bilateral Relations

The directorate sustained its initiatives to enhance cooperation on matters relating to education, training, culture, youth and sport with third countries through the bilateral agreements which Malta currently has with forty eight countries. During 2009 particular emphasis continued to be laid on the improvement of bilateral relations with neighbouring countries in the Mediterranean.

This Ministry gave its clearance to the signing of the Programme of Cultural Exchanges for the period 2009-2012 with China which was signed by the Chinese Ambassador during a state visit to Malta on 18 February 2009.

The 7th Session of the Maltese Tunisian Joint Commission was convened in Malta on 24 and 25 March. One of the items on the agenda was the conclusion of an Agreement for Cooperation in the Areas of Further and Higher Education, Scientific Research and Technology. The Agreement was eventually signed by the Hon Dr Tonio Borg, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs together with the Agreed Minutes. In line with the recently signed agreement the Tunisian authorities extended four

scholarships to Maltese students and the Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport reciprocated with four scholarships extended to Tunisian students to learn English in Malta.

A Memorandum of Understanding in the Field of Sports between the Malta Sport Council and Qatar Olympic Committee was signed during Dr George Abela, President of Malta, during his visit to Qatar on 26 August 2009.

A delegation from the Spanish Ministry of Education visited Malta from 4 to 7 June to discuss the possibility of introducing an exchange programme of language assistants in secondary schools. This is the first experience of the Ministry in language assistants. Notwithstanding an agreement was reached between the two sides to introduce this programme as from the immediate scholastic year 2009-2010 with four Spanish language assistants being selected by the Spanish authorities and posted in four different colleges around Malta in late September. On the other hand, a Maltese citizen was selected by the Maltese side and nominated to the Spanish authorities who took up his duties as language assistant in Spain to help in the teaching of English.

Another important event during 2009 was the official visit of the King of Spain to Malta in November. During this visit the following five agreements were concluded, in which this Ministry was directly involved:-

- Cooperation Programme in the Areas of Culture, Education and Science for 2009-2012;
- A Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in Cultural Heritage, involving the exchange of specialists and information;
- A Memorandum of Understanding on Archives;
- An exchange programme for Language Assistants;
- Cooperation between the Spanish Diplomatic School and the Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies (MEDAC) to offer training TO diplomats from both countries.

On 7 September, this Ministry gave its clearance to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the signing of an Agreement on Youth and Sport with Bulgaria which was intended to be signed during a State Visit on the same month. Later this Ministry was informed that due to changes in the Ministries portfolio in Bulgaria the agreement was deferred to a later date.

This Ministry held consultations with the University of Malta, the International School of Languages and Air Malta in order to set up a common front for participation in educational fairs abroad, starting with the WEBA fair which took place in Moscow in November. The intention was to market the Maltese education sector in the Russian market in the WEBA fair held on 12 to 14 November where the major education establishments were represented.

On a proposal emanating from the Slovak authorities to incorporate a new provision in the Agreement on Cultural Cooperation originally signed in 1979 with the then Czechoslovakia, with a provision on the teaching of secondary school Slovak students in Malta holding one year scholarships, this Ministry advised that the matter should be discussed between the two sides on any upcoming meetings held at EU level.

On 15 September, this Ministry gave clearance to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the signing of the Cultural, Educational and Scientific Cooperation Agreement with Croatia.

Under the terms of the Programme of Cooperation signed in Prague on December 2008, approval was given in June to three Czech students to benefit from three summer English bursaries.

As in previous years, an Education Officer attended the selection process held at the *Farnesina* in Rome for the selection of 68 students for short-term English summer bursaries, and students for the 18 months scholarships for long specialised research studies, that Malta extends to Italian students. During summer, 67 students benefited from these scholarships while five Italian students benefited from the long-

term scholarship programme. The Italian authorities used to offer Malta 120 man/months annually for scholarships holders i.e. graduates to further their studies in Italian universities. For the academic year 2009-2010 the Italian authorities reduced the number of scholarships to Maltese graduates by 25 percent to 90 man/months. Whilst the Maltese side kept offering 18 man/months granted to Italian graduates to further their studies at the University of Malta and 68 English language bursaries of three weeks each.

This Ministry is in consultation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on various requests which emanated from our bilateral relations with Cyprus, Georgia, Poland, Kosovo, Turkey, United Arab Emirate and Ukraine.

Towards the end of the year there was a preparatory meeting at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in preparation to the 26th Maltese-Libyan Joint Commission meeting which shall be taking place on 18 to 20 January 2010.

The directorate was involved in the selection process held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for scholarships awarded to Maltese students under the cooperation agreements with Italian, German and IMLI.

CHRISTOPHER BEZZINA
Permanent Secretary

Policy Development and Programme Implementation Directorate

Mission Statement

To coordinate policy ideas promoted by the different entities falling within the remit of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport and provide the necessary support in finding the resources to implement such policies.

The Director is accountable to the Permanent Secretary for initiating, developing and coordinating policy options to be reviewed by the Minister via the Permanent Secretary and for the effective management of the Ministry's Change Management Programme, including facilitating the implementation of the Ministry's endorsed policies, strategies and change management programmes, the setting of objectives-related performance measures, and the monitoring of implementation of the required programmes and activities to ensure the efficient delivery of the Ministry Business Plan.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

This Directorate was responsible for the identification of areas of policy development in the fields of education, culture, youth and sport and for the monitoring of the development and completion of projects deriving from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport policy goals, besides bringing about improvements in service quality through consultation with Directors and stakeholders. The Directorate has to keep abreast of trends and other developments, both locally and abroad, which may impinge on policy development in the area of education, culture, youth and sports, so as to ensure the development of policies in consonance with the relevant EU directives, recommendations and regulations.

NATIONAL AUTHORITY FOR THE EU EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES

The DPDPI is the regulatory body for the EU Educational Programmes administered by the European Union Programmes' Agency on behalf of the Office of the Permanent Secretary. The Agency is responsible for the following programmes:

- Lifelong Learning Programmes
- Comenius
- Erasmus
- Leonardo da Vinci
- Gruntvig
- Youth in Action Programme
- Euromed Platform
- Euroguidance
- Eurodesk
- Integration Fund.

PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION – EUROPEAN UNION STRUCTURAL FUNDS PROJECTS

During 2009 the staff of the PDPI directorate attended and organised a number of meetings to offer assistance and support to ERDF and ESF projects' team members. The staff participated and/or organised a total of 379 meetings with the various stakeholders. In total the Directorate is responsible for ensuring the timely implementation of 36 projects with an overall budget of €92,286,232.

During 2009, the Directorate formally established two new procedures regarding the submission of new ESF and/or ERDF project proposals and regarding the composition of ESF and/or ERDF tender evaluation committees and respective evaluation meetings; drafted guidance notes for beneficiaries with regard to the compilation of the Project Progress Reports (PPRs), procedures for departmental tendering and procedures for DoC tendering. DPDPI staff were invited to give lectures to Education Officers and Assistant Directors on ESF and ERDF matters and organised training for the different project leaders and project administrators on the use of the Structural Funds Database (SFD). The Directorate is also in an advanced stage of issuing an internal control manual.

OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME I COHESION POLICY 2007 – 2013

Investing in Competitiveness for a Better Quality of Life

European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)

The Directorate is at the moment responsible for the implementation of 23 ERDF projects bearing a budget of €59,481,359. During 2009, 11 new ERDF proposals with a total budget of €18,390,406 were submitted. These projects are being assessed by the Project Selection Committee within the Office of the Prime Minister. The projects selected for funding are:

- *ERDF 11: Furnishing and Equipping of the Chemistry and Biology Building Extensions:* The project will upgrade the teaching and research facilities at the Department of Biology and Chemistry both at graduate and undergraduate level. It will provide the necessary basic laboratory and field equipment for such facilities, especially in areas such as applied and analytical chemistry, applied and environmental biology and biotechnology. Total budget: €804,641
- *ERDF 12: Developing an Interdisciplinary Material Testing & Rapid Prototyping R&D Facility:* This involves the setting up of a materials characterization and rapid prototyping facility that will improve Malta's research and development potential in new product development and the enhancement of existing products through the rapid design and development of innovative products – utilising RP technology and the redesign of existing products. Total budget: €5,011,898
- *ERDF 17: Construction, Finishing and Equipment of ICT Faculty Building:* The construction, equipping and furnishing of a state of the art building to house the Faculty of ICT. The building should provide adequate, safe and comfortable facilities for teaching, training and research purposes. The building should integrate with and enhance the existing UoM architectural landscape. Total budget: €17,355,905
- *ERDF 18: Strengthening of Analytical Chemistry, Biomedical Engineering and Electromagnetics RTDI Facilities:* The setting up of a laboratory cluster for research in electromagnetic fields and their applications, a Biomedical Engineering Laboratory and the setting up of a modern analytical laboratory within the Department of Chemistry. The facilities required consist mainly of state-of-the-art equipment that is required to promote industry-academia research collaboration, and increase the number of graduates in the respective fields. Total budget: € 1,655,889
- *ERDF 32: Archaeological Heritage Conservation Project:* This project will see the embellishment and conservation of three temples - Ggantija Temples in Xaghra, Gozo, St Paul's Catacombs in Rabat (Malta) and Tarxien Temples. Total budget: €9,163,522
- *ERDF 54: Multimedia Training Centre at the Institute of Art and Design:* The project is concerned with the vast area of creative applications in Multimedia. This project will promote Multimedia Training and provide students with a chance to develop their creative intentions through hands-on training on digital technologies. It will also give an opportunity to re-skill the present workforce within the audio-visual sector and up-skill others with the latest Multimedia Techniques. Total budget: €1,613,409
- *ERDF 56: Upgrading and Expansion of MCAST Institute of Mechanical Engineering at Corradino Malta and Xewkija, Gozo:* Equipping Mechanical Workshop/Labs will enable MCAST to provide relevant training programmes leading to meaningful employment in a changing technological driven

sector. The additional floor to be built in the Mechanical Engineering block will enable MCAST offer a wider range of courses and take on additional full time and part time students. Total budget: €1,612,264

- *ERDF 57: Junior College Building Extension:* The extra floors to be built would include a number of classrooms and tutorial rooms with the state of the art education equipment that is required for a modern higher education college. Total budget: €1,582,007
- *ERDF 58: Purchase of Science and Technology laboratory equipment for State Schools:* The project aims at furnishing school laboratories with science equipment, computer hardware and software. This equipment will enable students to carry out effectively and efficiently experiments which are part and parcel of their curriculum. Apart from science, technology is also being targeted. This project will ensure that the latest equipment will be installed in science and technology laboratories. Total budget: €2,619,064
- *ERDF 62: Setting up of a Language Lab at MCAST Institute of Business and Commerce:* Equipping MCAST's Institute of Business and Commerce will provide its students with better training opportunities to enhance their language skills. This in turn should lead to employment in both the tourist and service sector. It should also create employment opportunities within the European context. Total budget: €476,901
- *ERDF 64: Construction and Equipping of University Computing Services Centre Building:* The building will house a data centre and related infrastructure that will service all the University, as well as provide IT facilities and learning spaces which will include computer laboratories, training rooms, videoconferencing facilities etc. Total budget: €7,959,688
- *ERDF 65: The upgrading and expansion of the MCAST Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineering Community Services at Corradino Malta and Xewkija Centre Gozo:* Equipping the Institute of Community Services with a modern equipped Science Laboratory help the Institute prepare better its students by providing practical experience on laboratory equipment they would likely find in the caring professions. Total budget: €932,241
- *ERDF 66: New computer systems and computer laboratories at Institute of Information and communication Technology at Corradino Malta and Gozo Centre Xemxija:* Equipping MCAST's Institute of Information and Communication Technology's computer labs with up to-date equipment will enable college provide relevant training programmes leading to meaningful employment in a fast changing technological driven sector. Total budget: €452,660
- *ERDF 76: Refurbishing the signal processing laboratory within the Department of CCE:* Refurbishing the Signal processing laboratory within the Department of Communications and Computer Engineering at the University of Malta with state of the art equipment to capture, process and present multimedia signals for various applications within the realm of ICT. The laboratory will be used to train under and post graduate students and researchers in this area. Total budget: €483,116
- *ERDF 77: Electrical Energy and Efficiency Laboratory for the University of Malta:* The project aims to set-up the infrastructure required for an Electrical Energy and Efficiency Laboratory at the University of Malta through the provision of state-of-the-art equipment concerned with: RES and conventional means of generation; conversion, storage and control of energy and its grid-connection. The project shall also invest in equipment for monitoring of electrical energy, its efficiency, and power quality. Total budget: €642,114
- *ERDF 78: Upgrading of Giordan Lighthouse Global Atmospheric Watch (GAW) Research Station:* The project consists of upgrading a present instrument-measuring facility for atmospheric research at Giordan lighthouse, Gozo and the corresponding laboratory and office facilities at the University Centre, Xewkija, Gozo, to accommodate the increased data throughput and staff required. Space is already available at both Giordan lighthouse and the University Xewkija premises and these will be further developed. Total budget: €489,678

- *ERDF 79: Setting up of Mechanical Engineering Computer Modelling and Simulation Laboratory:* The setting up of a computer modelling and simulation laboratory in the Department of Mechanical Engineering will improve the level of teaching and research activity within the Department. Total budget: €482,165
- *ERDF 80: A Super-Computing Laboratory for the University of Malta:* This project aims to build a state of the art computing facility for the University of Malta and for use by research-performing SMEs. This facility will be equipped with the latest modelling software in environmental, discrete element, protein, urban, climate, financial and fluid dynamic modelling. It will also provide a system for the development of multi-core programming and grid computing systems. Total budget: €685,420
- *ERDF 81: Enhancing the Health Biotechnology facilities at the University:* This project is aimed at enhancing the Health Biotechnology facility that will improve Malta's research and development potential in the fields of genetics, cellular physiology and pharmacogenomics. Total budget: €4,445,322
- *ERDF 82: Modernising the University of Malta's Control Systems Engineering Laboratory:* The project aims to modernise the infrastructure of the Control Systems Engineering Laboratory at the University of Malta through provision of state-of-the-art equipment that is not available in the lab, and replacement of the largely obsolete equipment currently in use. This investment will build up the university's capacity to address modern teaching and research activities in Automatic Control Engineering. Total budget: €608,768
- *ERDF 90: Implementing Green Activities at the University of Malta:* The project aims at increasing energy efficiency at the University of Malta through the installation of power factor correction equipment for five on site substations, reducing the demand for grid energy through the use of energy saving T5 florescent tubes, the use of presence sensors in offices, lecture rooms and corridors, and through generating electrical energy by installing photovoltaic systems. Total budget: €4,397,206
- *ERDF 101: Installation of Renewable Energy Sources at MCAST:* The project involves the installation of electrical power generating systems complete with all the necessary associated hardware and monitoring systems on MCAST buildings' Roofs at the College's Main Campus in Paola. These installations will be complemented with a wind turbine. This Equipment is expected to generate a peak of 130kW and 4kW respectively. Total budget: €994,056
- *ERDF 109: Digitization Strategy and Framework for the National Library of Malta:* The National Library seeks to establish a framework to digitize part of its collections, ensuring preservation of the original material. The main activities comprise the planning of the project down to the least details, the issuing of a tender for the purchase of the equipment, the actual purchase and installation of the equipment and the training of staff regarding the digitization process. Total budget: €176,994

OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME II COHESION POLICY 2007 – 2013

Empowering People for More Jobs and a Better Quality of Life

European Social Fund (ESF)

The Directorate is at the moment responsible for the implementation of 13 ESF projects bearing a budget of €27,641,312. During the year two new ESF proposals were submitted with a total budget of €2,714,569. The projects are at the moment being assessed by the Project Selection Committee. The 13 projects selected for funding are:

- *ESF 1.21: Parents and Teachers fusion ICT Training Programme:* The aim of this project is to enhance ICT confidence within parents and teachers so as to encourage the use of ICT within their children and students. Total Budget: €607,245
- *ESF 1.22: Research Analysis and Training for Enhancing the University Library:* The University is seeking to transform its library facilities and information services from one primarily based on printed material to a digitalised online format. The project is proposing to conduct a research study on the

requirements of such a system, identify best practices and train staff in this regard. Total Budget: €435,450

- *ESF 1.24: Career Guidance Capacity Building*: The project proposes the training of personnel, at Masters level, to render effective professional service within a dynamic framework in the educational and training institutions at all levels of the career paths. Total Budget: €534,450
- *ESF 1.25: Strategic Educational Pathways Scholarships (STEPS) Scheme*: The scheme will offer post-graduate bursaries at Masters and Doctoral level for fields of studies in areas of national priority and a grant to the UoM for access to e-journals subscription for scholars within the scheme. Total Budget: €9,946,384
- *ESF 1.28: Accrediting Quality Vocational Training*: The objective of the VQ project is to design competence matrices for current local vocational qualifications as a tool for programme accreditation. Total Budget: €452,042
- *ESF 1.29: Valuing all Skills for the Labour Market*: The objective of Skills Plus is to create the infrastructure for the design of occupational standards in 9 key sectors as indicators for the design of vocational and professional training programmes and the validation of informal and non-formal learning. Total Budget: €417,917
- *ESF 1.31: Wood CPR: Education and training in Wood Conservation – Restoration*: The project improves education and skills in relation to cultural heritage in wood within the context of the European Qualifications Framework, through investing in Malta's education system, addressing skills mismatches in the wood sector, research and innovation in science and education, ICT support for research and education, innovation activities linked to educational reform and the changing labour market. Total Budget: €541,427
- *ESF 1.33: Increasing Student Capacity in ICT in Malta*: MCAST will embark on a project called 'Increasing ICT Capacity in Malta' in order to ensure that the country's objective to increase capacity building in the field of ICT is attained. Total Budget: €4,962,642
- *ESF 1.34: Addressing Skills Mismatches in the Aviation Maintenance Industry*: The project is intended to offer basic training EASA PART-66 Category A, and EASA PART-66 Category B1, EASA PART-66 Category B2 and Aircraft Structures and Composites training which will lay the foundations for expert knowledge, competences and licensing in the aviation maintenance sector. Total Budget: €2,382,872
- *ESF 1.36: Professional Development Programmes for MCAST Staff & Student's Top-Up Degrees*: The project has three main objectives: Professional development of Academic and Administrative staff at MCAST; Improvement of quality of courses offered by MCAST; Launch of Degree Programmes. Total Budget: €5,921,105
- *ESF 3.48: Lifelong Learning for Enhanced Employability for Parents (LLEEP)*: The LEEP project aims to upskill parents, especially mothers-as-homemakers, but also fathers, of young children in vulnerable communities, so as to (a) enhance their children's social skills and literacy attainment, and (b) to take on leadership and service roles in facilitating such upskilling and educational involvement in other parents. This leads to increased uptake in parental lifelong learning pathways which, together with employment opportunities in the project, enhance employability for women from disadvantaged groups. Total Budget: €107,813
- *ESF 3.49: Training of Inclusion Coordinators for Secondary Education*: This project consists of the training of 15 teachers to become Inclusion Coordinators (INCOs) in secondary schools through a two-year post-graduate course. Total Budget: €119,157
- *ESF 3.51: Creative Lives Creative Schools*: 'Creative Lives' aims to provide before-school and after-school activities for compulsory school age of children of parents, mostly parents and with a minimum percentage from vulnerable communities, who wish to return or to enter the labour market. Total Budget: €1,213,204

OTHER EU FUNDS

The Directorate is responsible for the monitoring and supervision of other EU related programmes, namely INTERREG III, INTERREG IV and EEA/Norway Financial Mechanism. Under the INTERREG III programme, a total of 38 projects are being implemented with a total budget of €4,220,460, whereas under the INTERREG IV programme a total number of 14 projects with a budget of €2,307,934 are being implemented. The entities benefitting from these funds are the University of Malta, Heritage Malta, Fondazzjoni Temi Zammit, Institute for Tourism Studies and the National Archives.

Heritage Malta are also benefitting from a project co-financed under the EEA/Norway Financial Mechanism with a budget of €450,987.

QUALITY SERVICE CHARTERS

A thorough review of all Quality Service Charters of the Ministry's different departments and entities was initiated. The scope of the exercise is to adjourn the related information, make it more user-friendly with regard to what kind of service the customer is to expect and above all, and in line with the new Public Administration Act, promote a more corporate image for the Ministry.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Monitored agreements with internal and external institutions/agencies, ensuring cost-effectiveness and delivery of services;
- Maintained and strengthened further the good rapport that already existed with all departments and entities falling within the Ministry;
- Actively participated on boards upon appointment
- Participated and addressed seminars, conferences and forums.
- Staff participated in courses, seminars and meetings.

ROBERT TABONE

Director (Policy Development and Programme Implementation)

Ministry for Social Policy

Health, the Elderly & Community Care Sector Office of the Permanent Secretary

RESOURCES AND SUPPORT DIVISION

Human Resources and People Management

Planning and Organisation

Whilst maintaining electronic records of the authorised complements of the various sections of the Health Division, this Office submitted monthly employment and other returns containing statistical data concerning the employment situation within the Health Division.

Resourcing

As in previous years, the Section processed the recruitment, appointment, progression and promotion of several personnel in various grades. The following tables indicate the posts filled, number of resignations, retirements and transfers processed during the year:

Grade	Progression		Internal Call		Public Call		Total
	M	F	M	F	M	F	
General Service	11	21	10	2	6	2	52
Professional	5	3	6	-	58	52	154
Messengerial	-	-	4	1	-	-	5
Technical	-	-	3	-	-	-	3
Departmental	16	27	211	97	79	220	650
Industrial	1	1	11	1	-	-	14
Total	33	52	245	101	143	304	878

Grade	Resigned/Dismissed		Retired		Medical Grounds		Transferred		Total
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
General Service	-	4	4	3	-	-	5	3	19
Messengerial	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Professional	-	3	-	-	-	1	5	2	11
Technical	-	-	1	4	1	-	1	-	7
Departmental	-	7	10	4	-	-	5	9	35
Industrial	-	-	9	1	-	1	4	1	16
Total	-	14	24	12	1	2	20	15	88

During 2009, the Section workload increased considerably insofar as progression and promotion of employees were concerned, mainly as a result of the various agreements signed with the unions.

Employee Relations

During 2009, the following requests were processed:

- *Injury on Duty* - 45 cases in respect of Health employees (19 males and 26 females);
- *Medical Boards* - 114 requests (65 males and 49 females) for medical boards on behalf of ministries, government departments, corporations and other organisations;
- *Discipline* - as per following table:

Discipline	Total
Number of charges issued during 2009 in terms of Regs. 18,19,20 and 36 of the PSC Discipline Regulations	160
Criminal Offences	13
Cases finalised by the end of 2009	153

- *Applications* – as per following table:

Type of Application	Male	Female	Total
Maternity Leave	-	144	144
Parental/Responsibility Leave	1	131	132
Reduced Hours	16	403	419
Unpaid Leave	10	32	42
Sports Leave	29	12	41
Cultural Leave	3	1	4
Emigration Leave	7	21	28
Quarantine Leave	0	1	1
Union Leave	10	11	21
Leave to do Voluntary Work	4	2	6
Leave to try Alternative Employment	2	0	2
Special Paid Leave	20	25	45

Staff Development

The R&S Division focused again in investing more in the training of its employees to enhance their personal and professional competencies and skills required to run the Health Services efficiently and effectively.

During 2009, several employees were granted study leave in connection with qualifying examinations, training courses both locally and abroad as well as clinical attachments in hospitals/conferences abroad as indicated in the following table:

	Total
Medical	949
Paramedical	417
Nursing/Midwifery	612
Dentists	20
Pharmacists	27
Other	17
Total	2,042

Continuous Professional Development

As of June 2009, the Continuous Professional Development (CPD) Scheme for Midwives and Nurses was transferred from the responsibility of the Directorate Nursing and Support Services falling under the Public Health Regulation Division, to the People Management Unit falling under the Resources and Support Division, which was already responsible for the CPD Scheme for Paramedics and Health Inspectors.

Registry

During the year under review, incoming mail amounted to about 98,000 items. These were received from the general public, government departments, parastatal bodies, hospitals, out-stations, local councils and other organisations. Outgoing mail during 2009 amounted to 150,949 items. These can be classified as indicated hereunder:

Local Ordinary Mail	143,106
Local Departmental Mail	3,776
Local Registered Mail	1,830
Overseas Ordinary Mail	1,479
Overseas Registered Mail	393

The Registry also keeps a record of all registered letters sent both locally and abroad as well as recording the amounts of the daily consignments of mail dispatched.

The following circulars were processed and distributed by the Registry Section:

Office of the Prime Minister (MPO + OPM)	145 (97 + 48)
Ministry of Finance	12
Contracts Department	27
Treasury Department	6
Health Division (DH circulars)	150
Others – Memos	25

In addition to the responsibility for the safe custody of thousands of files the Registry opened another 5,728 new files during 2009. The Registry is also responsible for the custody of about 2,732 personal files together with 56,500 files of retired, deceased and recruited employees.

During the latter part of 2009, an exercise was carried out with representatives of other Registries operating within other directorates and entities with a view to streamlining and rationalising operations and dispensing with unnecessary duplication of work, and wastage of human and material resources. Mater Dei Hospital and Mt. Carmel Hospital featured prominently in this exercise, being the most affected in the light of their prevailing procedures and work practices.

Supplies and Projects Section

During 2009, the Supplies and Projects Section published 255 departmental tenders and 57 departmental quotations. Another nine tenders valued over the departmental limit of €47,000 were published through the Department of Contracts.

192 Letters of Acceptance in respect of tenders and 10 Letters of Acceptance in respect of quotations were issued whilst another five Letters of Acceptance were awarded on behalf of the Health Division by the Director General Contracts. Twelve direct orders were placed. The contracts awarded were for the procurement of medical and non-medical equipment, provisions, uniforms, store material, capital projects, refurbishment of various wards and repair and service agreements for Mater Dei Hospital, Sir Paul Boffa Hospital, New Health Screening Facility, Karen Grech Rehabilitation, National Blood Transfusion Centre, Pharmacy of Your Choice, Public Health Department and Primary Health Care Centres and all other 'Health' departments.

Apart from these tenders, various requisitions pertaining to the above mentioned facilities, institutions and departments were processed. The General Stores processed thousands of requisitions for the procurement of equipment, general store items, spares and repair and servicing of equipment. These were procured through the issue of quotations and/or direct from the open market when the amount involved was minimal.

Furthermore, various requisitions for IT equipment repairs throughout the Health Division were processed following the relevant MITA referral through the Information Management Unit and the relevant Local Purchase Orders were issued.

Payments in respect of contracts and local purchase orders of a capital expenditure nature for all the above mentioned facilities/institutions and departments including also Mount Carmel Hospital were effected by this section. Payments falling under the recurrent expenditure were also effected for all contracts except cleaning contracts, and also for IT equipment repairs and all requisitions processed through General Stores except those relating to maintenance of vehicles.

Accounts Section

During 2009, the Accounts Section's task to effect payments for goods and services without delay and to provide monthly funds position reports and other financial statistical data to the various administrative directors within the Division continued to function smoothly. Data obtainable by means of the Departmental Accounting System (DAS) was utilised to draw up the necessary financial reports requested

by directors. Such reports were used for the drawing up of cash flow, revised estimates and occasionally in replies to various parliamentary questions.

Another important function performed by the Accounts Section is the drawing up, together with Salaries and Revenue Sections, of the quarterly accrual report requested by the Ministry of Finance. Such reports are also compiled by means of the data provided by the DAS system.

The Health Division Accounts Section (within Resources & Support Division) continued to work hand in hand with the Mater Dei Accounts Section. All payment vouchers generated by both Sections were batched at the former Section, pending a move by Mater Dei Accounts to become financially autonomous.

A total of 1,306 batches of payment vouchers, schedules and transfer and adjustment vouchers generated respectively by Accounts, Supplies, Salaries and Revenue sections within the Health Division were submitted by the section to Treasury Department for processing.

The table below shows expenditure for 2009:

Item	2009 (€)
Personal Emoluments	128,539,478
Operational & Maintenance	35,212,228
Programmes/Initiatives	89,957,137
Contributions to Govt. Entities	32,594,748
Total	286,303,591

Revenue Section

The Revenue Section of the Health Division, during 2009, issued several reminders to outstanding debtors in its drive to achieve its main target – decreasing the level of arrears of revenue.

These debtors included foreign patients who were hospitalised at St Luke's Hospital from 1991 to 2005. However, for the years 2006 – 2009 these debtors were being monitored by Mater Dei Hospital. Several reminders were also sent to other debtors, including health employees who had resigned from Government Service; overpayments in their salaries and penalties against those employees who were granted special leave but failed to fulfil their contractual obligations.

5,250 reminders were sent as follow-up action to these outstanding debtors and in some cases legal action was instituted for the settlement of amounts due. Other bills were also issued in respect of de-ratting exemption certificates, fines, licences, examination and course fees, medical tests regarding certain employees and overtime performed by Health Inspectors in hotels.

Remittance Statements regarding cash/cheques and other foreign currency were prepared on a daily basis and forwarded to the Central Bank of Malta.

The Revenue Section manages three Imprest Accounts which serve for recording payment of Petty Cash expenses incurred by Head Office, Mater Dei Hospital and Environmental Health.

Refunds, effected by means of payment vouchers, were made to 3,685 persons who returned previously hired medical aides.

Swipe cards transactions amounted to € 82,742. During 2009 € 367,963.67 were deposited in the below-the-line accounts as follows:

Below-the- line Account	Amount (€)
Council for nurses and midwives	5,801.74
Conversion Courses	9,318.00
Specialists Accreditation Committee	1,330.39
Pharmacy Council	16,467.30
Loans to Medical Aids	150,848.68
Medical Council	90,714.93
Public Health	69,371.38
National Blood Transfusion	1,685.34
Appeals Committee	1,779.76
Receipts obo Departments	11,681.15
Health Ethics Committee	8,900
PHD Leonardo Mob Programme	65
Total	367,963.67

The total revenue collected for 2009 amounted to €1,148,023, as shown in the following table:

Revenue by Item	Amount (€)
0229 Miscellaneous Licences	28,295
0301 Attestations/ Certificates	25,543
0349 Miscellaneous Fees	2,331
0416 Services to Third Parties	12,731
0431 Ambulance and Funeral Expenses	4,678
0432 Sale of Medicines	211,126
0434 Hospital Fees	662,856
0901 Sale of gravesites	8,367
0999 Miscellaneous Receipts	192,096
Total	1,148,023

In 2009, the Revenue Section collected a total amount of €1,515,986.60; €1,148,023 being total revenue, and another €367,963.67 which were deposited in the below-the-line accounts.

Salaries Section

The Section's primary function is the payment of personal emoluments on a four-weekly basis. This task entails a considerable amount of preparatory work, culminating in the inputting of adjustments according to established procedures and timeframes, thus ensuring that specific targets and deadlines are met. During 2009, the Health Department's Personal Emoluments Expenditure amounted to:

Item	Totals (€)
1110 – Holders of Political Office	0
1210 – Salaries	80,435,533
1310 – Bonus	1,292,883
1410 – Income Supplement	1,142,745
1510 – Social Security Contribution	6,944,847
1610 – Allowances	33,916,885
1710 - Overtime	4,806,585
Total	128,539,478

The Salaries Section performs a number of associated functions, essential for the smooth running of the Division. It contributes towards the formulation of the Departmental Business Plan (Personal Emoluments Vote) and submits monthly financial reports on a regular basis. It is responsible for the continuous monitoring of the Department's financial position, the monthly expenditure trend, fund status and the projected cost of the various items constituting the Personal Emoluments Vote. Such reports have a direct bearing on the submission of requests for additional funds to the Department of Finance or the redistribution of funds onto other votes if approved by the Ministry of Finance.

The Section may be described as an information hub, where the collation and segmentation of data forms an integral part of the routine. This process facilitates the formulation of various reports and provides a sound basis for analysis. It is responsible for the daily performance of numerous transactions involving the payment and recouping of funds and the preparation of draft replies to parliamentary questions. The Section also deals with numerous general and inter-departmental queries, including matters raised by employees deployed within the various departments of the Ministry of Health.

The Salaries Section coordinates particular functions involving other paying sections within the government hospitals and the Department of Primary Health Care. Part of the Salaries Section migrated to Gozo but contact is still maintained through a liaison officer. Coordination is essential in order to maintain standard and uniform procedures throughout. Likewise, this contributes to the effective monitoring of the Department's expenditure trend, the projection of expenses and the implementation of remedial strategies where and when required.

Travel Section

In 2009 there were 296 travel cases. The majority of these cases were conference-related in matters concerning the European Commission, European Council and European Presidency. Other conferences were organised by WHO and HOPE.

Transport Services

New control systems (like CCTV cameras) were introduced and existing ones upgraded, surveying of obsolete and unserviceable vehicles was carried out whilst four cars were secured from MMDNA. A call for tenders was issued for the procurement of a number of ambulances and tail lifts as well as for the procurement, installation and commissioning of navigation system on ambulances and all vehicles at G'Mangia Garage. Works were undertaken on an unserviceable ambulance which was then converted into a hearse. The Fleet Management System was upgraded to allow access to verification on fuel consumption, procurement of spare parts, and maintenance services on each vehicle. A check list on all operating vehicles was introduced to promote transparency and accountability and identify any damages in time. Meanwhile, more attention was directed on maximizing human resources through more administrative control procedures to ensure more efficiency in service delivery.

2009 marked also the decision to attribute the overall management of the Ambulance emergency services to Mater Dei Hospital, thus relieving the responsibility from the Transport Section stationed at G'Mangia. This move followed extensive meetings with all major stakeholders and unions representing this sector.

Security Services

During 2009 discussions were held with the major stakeholders in an effort to overhaul and restructure the security services of the Health Division through streamlining and redeployment of personnel for maximisation of resources. As part of this exercise, 13 security guards previously operating at SLH were redeployed to health centres which were experiencing acute personnel shortages in this area. More discussions and negotiations with the respective unions representing this category are earmarked for 2010.

Parliamentary Questions

This Division was concerned with the processing of all PQs directly falling within its area of competence, besides assuming overall responsibility for drafting of consolidated replies covering all divisions within the Ministry (Health, Elderly & Community Care).

Councils, Boards & Committees

The Resources and Support Division undertook the routine exercise of assisting in the process of the re-appointment of a number of statutory and departmental councils, boards, committees within the Ministry (Health and Elderly) following the respective expiry of term of office. Appointments of statutory councils/boards/committees were published in the Malta Government Gazette.

Private Secretariat Contracts

This Office coordinated the processing of these contracts (in respect of personnel engaged within the Parliamentary Secretariats for Health and for the Elderly & Community Care), be they new contracts or renewals thereof.

Green Office

Despite the limited resources at its disposal, this Office provided support to the Environmental Health Department with the provision of 12 sets of waste separation bins for use at its outstations across the health inspectorate districts. With the full coordination and collaboration of the Coordinating Unit within the Ministry for Resources and Rural Affairs (MRRA) and WasteServ (Malta) Ltd, a series of educational lectures conducted by the latter were organised for all green focal points and interested staff within the Ministry (HECC). These were well attended and proved a veritable success. With the appointment of a new Permanent Secretary in March 2009, a Management Meeting chaired by the latter in the presence of the outgoing Permanent Secretary was held with all focal points. Meanwhile, the process was initiated for the procurement of an electric car to replace a conventional one used for general use. This initiative will contribute towards mitigating the Ministry's carbon footprint in line with government policy and direction.

An energy audit exercise across the whole Public Service, spearheaded by the MRRA and initiated following a call for tenders, failed to materialise within target time, with some ministries (HECC being amongst them) missing their turn. It is now expected that the whole exercise will be concluded within the early months of 2010.

The Ministry Green Leader stationed at Head Office represented the Ministry through participation in the 3rd European Conference/Fair on Education for Sustainable Development: Renewable Energy and Climate Change held in Hamburg.

Various other plausible green initiatives were undertaken by directorates within the Strategy and Sustainability Division, Public Health Regulation Division, Health Care Services Division (including Mater Dei Hospital, Mt Carmel Hospital), Zammit Clapp Hospital and Medicines Authority.

ZAMMIT CLAPP HOSPITAL (ZCH) AND KARIN GRECH HOSPITAL

Overview

The major challenges in 2009 comprised the maintenance of optimal service delivery across two sites, that is, ZCH and KGH, and the refurbishment project at KGH.

Following the approval of funding for the Refurbishment Programme for KGH, works started early in 2009 to refurbish the wards namely those at LEVEL 1 and 2. These had been left vacant purposely to enable works to take place without inconveniencing the patients unnecessarily. As the year progressed, efforts were redirected to migrating the services at ZCH to KGH as soon as possible. Hence works were shifted to the North Wing Level 2. Working closely with FMS and Health's purchasing department, architects, engineers and technical officers, through 26 technical meetings and substantial number of on-site meetings, works were coordinated by the ZCH/KGH management, utilising where possible the Hospital's own maintenance team. Significant effort by all parties enabled the drawing up of 61 tenders, valued at €1.3m,

the majority of which were issued and adjudicated. This was the feasible target figure which was aimed for at the start of the year. The work done in 2009 should enable the consolidation of services in the early part of 2010.

In April a new hospital management committee was appointed. This new committee has since met 12 times. The Hospital Management welcomed the appointment of a Financial Controller in May, which enabled Management to not only understand better its financial position but also to start a process of financial auditing of the various cost centres and their related expenditures. This was high on the new committee's agenda.

New control systems were implemented enabling savings in the budgeted expenditure from €11m to €10,045,000. This reduction was achieved in spite of substantial increases in cost centres such as emoluments, patient food and oxygen, increased costs that are linked to tendered agreements as well as the state of patients admitted. These cost containment efforts will continue in 2010 as more changes and controlling systems are implemented all through the management structure.

Clinical Services

With reference to bed statistics, the Clinical Services essentially remained the same as that of the previous year i.e. 215 beds divided into 153 beds Geriatrics and Adult Rehabilitation and 62 beds Transitional. These beds and services were provided from two hospitals, ZCH and KGH, split as follows: 60 Geriatrics Rehabilitation beds at ZCH, 93 Rehabilitation beds (62 Geriatrics and 31 Younger Adult) at KGH and 672 Transitional beds at KGH. The patients of the two Transitional Wards were transferred as originally planned to new wards in Mount Carmel Hospital on 2-3 December. The nine consultants managed a team of an average of 12 doctors (three HST/Senior Registrar/Registrar + seven BST + two House Officers) in the provision of 1,315 admissions. The average patient age was 79.7 years. Mean Length of Stay was 34.9%. 74% of all admissions were from MDH. There were 1,306 discharges, of which 57.7% were to a community setting i.e. own or carer's residence, private, church or government home. 21.1% were discharged to a long term care institution. The mortality rate was 12.5%.

	Discharged Patients in 2008 Combined ZCH & KGH	%	Discharged Patients in 2009 Combined ZCH & KGH	%
Discharge Destination				
Own Home	715	50.3	602	46.1
Government Homes	57	4.0	44	3.4
Private Homes	73	5.1	58	4.4
Church Homes	75	5.3	49	3.8
Transfer to Transitional Wards	166	11.7	128	9.8
SVPR	32	2.3	105	8.0
SJA/SGP/SB			11	0.8
PPP Homes	63	4.4	85	6.5
Readmissions to Mater Dei Hospital	65	4.6	61	4.7
Deceased	173	12.3	163	12.5
Total	1,419		1,306	100%

The greatest challenge for 2009 was again delayed discharges due to long-term residences, which is the main reason for the resulting turnover due to inadequate patient flow through the system. Out of the 413 long-term care (LTC) patients identified in 2009, 67 were still at ZCH and KGH by the year end compared to 40 at beginning of year. The 346 LTC discharges were discharged to the following locations:

SVPR	103	Private Homes	3
PPP schemes	84	Own Home	6
St Jeanne Antide, MCH	3	Mater Dei Hospital, Re Admission	8
San Gorg Preca/Santa Bernardetta, MCH	62	Deceased at ZCH/KGH	66
Government Homes	11		

1,849 consultation requests from MDH were dealt with during the year, the majority from the Department of Medicine (1,145), Department of Orthopaedics (415) and Department of Surgery (247). Day Hospital operations continued as per previous years at ZCH. In all, 724 new community referrals were dealt with and 1,956 medical follow-up visits recorded, which included patients discharged from the wards.

Nursing Services

The Nursing Department continued to work on improving care practices to ensure quality care delivery through continuous review of its policies and procedures. Focus groups continued to evaluate specific areas of care, including Nutrition, Continence training, Infection Control and Wound Management. Educational opportunities for nursing and nursing support staff have been provided regularly.

Outcome measurement, as in previous years, included the Patient Discharge Questionnaire and the Barthel Index score:

- *The Patient Discharge Questionnaire* at Zammit Clapp Hospital had a response rate of 42.26% and showed a 99.2% patient satisfaction, while at Karin Grech Hospital the response rate was 59.85% and showed a 94.9% patient satisfaction. As in previous years, patients perceived a greater improvement in their condition than relatives did, showing different expectations of these sample groups. i.e. ZCH 87% and KGH 87.2% of patients felt they had improved by discharge while only 64.9% of ZCH and 64.5% of KGH relatives agreed.
- *The Barthel Index (BI) Scale* is a simple index of independence to score the ability of a patient. The Scale ranges from 0 for total dependency to 20 for maximum independence. The mean BI score on admission for the Geriatric Rehabilitation Wards was 7.24 while the discharge score was 10.16, an improvement of 2.92 while the mean BI score on admission for the Rehabilitation ward for all ages (M8) was 7.48 and the discharge score was 13.97, an improvement of 6.49. The mean difference of 2.92 compares well with the mean functional improvement of 2.69 in 2008.

The situation of having two hospitals sharing resources and the need for refurbishment of all wards at Karin Grech Hospital, together with having an annual influx of new nurses replacing those that wish to work at MDH, creates challenges. However, in spite of all these challenges, the outcome measurements indicate that care delivery has not been compromised.

Occupational Therapy Services

OT services were provided at ZCH on the wards and day hospital as well as on the wards at KGH and in the outpatients department at SLH. Services included individual assessment and intervention, equipment recommendations and processing of applications (KNPD, Housing), group therapy sessions, ADL training, carer education, a 10 week memory programme, family training sessions, team home visits, instrumental home visits and work site visits. The OT department continued to provide the outlet service offering patients and their carers the possibility of purchasing personal and home equipment directly from the hospital or have larger equipment delivered to their home. A total of 6,223 sessions were provided by the day hospital to 561 patients and 4,250 sessions were provided at the outpatients to 312 patients. Inpatient services provided at ZCH included a total of 13,970 sessions to 691 patients and at KGH 16,030 sessions to 1,068 patients. Other activities included a Falls Awareness Day, Continence Awareness Days and the OT National Day. Four OT teams were set up to develop new OT services planned for the rehabilitation hospital at KGH including Work Rehabilitation, Sensory Integration for Adults, Wheelchair and Seating Clinic and Day Hospital Programmes. Discussions were held to set up and develop neuro-rehabilitation services at KGH and recommendations were made for dementia-friendly ward environments.

Pharmacy Services

The Pharmacy continued to offer patient services, which incorporate clinical pharmacy services and dispensing to discharged patients. A total of 1,315 patients had their treatment checked and reviewed on

admission. A pharmacy patient profile was kept for each. The individualised patient drug treatments on all ward drug administration trolleys were cross-checked weekly with the corresponding ward prescription record sheets and subsequently topped-up. 10,932 checks were done by the end of the year. Daily inspections of the emergency drug drawers were carried out whilst the expiry date of all drugs on the wards was checked monthly. Counselling sessions were held with 1,024 patients and/or their carers on discharge, to whom 186 green prescriptions were dispensed. Each was given a discharge pack consisting of a 7-day supply of medications and an individualised medication information sheet. A total of 713 applications for non-formulary items were filled in according to protocol.

The logistics services which incorporate procurement, distribution and the pharmacy computer system was led by pharmacy technicians with pharmacist input. The total expenditure on pharmaceuticals and medical devices for 2009 was €506,641. Extensive topping-up services were in place for drugs and pharmaceuticals whilst medical devices were supplied on order. Around 101,000 items were issued by the pharmacy for a total cost of €502,599. The department provided clinical staff with regular reports on expenditure and medical management issues. Once again, the influenza vaccination programme was coordinated by the pharmacy department.

Education and training has a high profile within the pharmacy department, recognising the benefits of having appropriately qualified and competent staff that are committed to continuing professional and personal development. Two pharmacists completed their Masters degree in Pharmacy and another two obtained a post-graduate certificate in Clinical Pharmacy. Pharmacy staff attended three conferences, two seminars and 14 CPD sessions and delivered 13 presentations to hospital staff. The department was once again identified by the Pharmacy Department at the University of Malta as a site for undergraduate training. Twenty-two clinical practice sessions were held for a total of 28 students. These included ward rounds, patient profiling and case presentations. The department also took a total of 10 undergraduates on vocational placements throughout 2009. A total of 27 meetings were held with a further six students two have been working on their dissertations within the ZCH/KGH setting.

Physiotherapy In-Patient Services

Physiotherapy services were provided to all referred inpatients at Zammit Clapp and Karin Grech Hospitals in line with goals set on initial assessment and ongoing evaluation in collaboration with the interprofessional team. 1,315 new admissions received a total of 49,609 treatment sessions during the year under review. An on-call service was also available after normal hours of duty on a daily basis. Physiotherapy services were also provided at the day hospital at Zammit Clapp to 619 new patients referred from weekly clinics and those referred for follow-up on discharge from wards at both hospitals. These patients received a total of 4,907 treatment sessions.

Staff participated in activities service evaluation; review and development of practices and policies; research and audit; training of: rotating physiotherapy staff, hospital staff and students; organisation of and attendance to CPD events; and in awareness campaigns. Physiotherapists formed part of various internal and external committees such as the Steering committee for practice development; the Infection Control Team; the Malta Association of Physiotherapists CPD Advisory Board and the Federation of Public Health. Physiotherapy services will be participating in the future development of rehabilitation services, which are to occur with the complete migration of services to Karin Grech hospital and the construction of the new Rehabilitation hospital.

Speech Language Pathology Services

During 2009 the Speech Language Unit continued operations from two venues, ZCH and KGH, delivering the equivalent of 28 SLP days per week. The focus this year was on the consolidation of existing services offered to patients, the promotion of more uniformity in intervention and the delivering of intensive intervention where necessary. The SLP Unit delivered CPD sessions to other staff members regarding the role of the SLP (especially in dysphagia), as well as worked on obtaining and developing materials required

for appropriate intervention delivery, including objective assessment for patients suffering from dysphagia (FEES). A number of lists of intervention materials were also compiled. Patient activity was as follows: 483 new cases, with 3,667 sessions being carried individually and in groups. 438 patients were discharged from SLP services at ZCH/KGH and 31 persons were referred to SLP services in the community for follow-up intervention. Investigations using videofluoroscopy sessions were conducted at MDH. A number of objectives were achieved in 2009. The M-SLaST, a speech language screening test, was finalised during this year. SLPs have worked in different special interest groups in the areas of Dysphagia and AAC. The Aphasia special interest group was also established. SLPs were involved in the National Dementia Focus Group, the Nutrition Conference and the Nutrition Committee, and participated in the Speech Language Annual Meeting, Management & Leadership training and workshops for the development of the Vision/Mission. A number of training workshops were delivered to other professionals and carers. SLPs also had an active role in the organisation and delivery of Dementia classes. With the aim of enhancing the continuation of intervention and smooth follow up of patients, liaison with SLPs in community clinics, at MDH, other hospitals and homes was promoted in 2009

Social Worker Services

1,558 patients received Social Work Services through In-Patients, Day Hospital Out-Patients SW Community Support Line. 80.48% of the patients received Full Social Work Service Packages whilst 19.52% of the patients received Basic Social Work Service Packages.

The SW Services delivered, amongst other activities, 2,624 Interventions to the time value of one hour and 9,027 activities to the time value of 15 minutes. Social Workers wrote up a total of 5,858 reporting journals. Social Workers also practised on an Inter-Professional Team basis when they participated in 157 Home visits and 158 Family Training Sessions. Social Workers prepared 580 reports for the Admissions Board of SVPR and Community Homes for the Elderly in respect of Long Term Care Patients.

Key differences in the work include an increasing number of Long Term Care Patients and the many complexities being encountered with a greater number of the patients/families as the population grows older. Less people, inadequate community services for more dependent patients and complex health problems are key causes for the increase in Long Term Care Patients. Social Workers are now also working with adult patients below the age of 60 years. The process for the recruitment of one full-time and two part-time Social Workers was also completed.

Orthotics and Prosthetics Unit

Hereunder is a brief summary of patients referred/seen at OPU:

Clinic 5 patients (orthotic and prosthetic patients)

Clinic 12 Prosthetic clinic 6 clinics per year 18 days per clinic

Clinic 13 Orthotics Clinic 4 clinics by 5 days and 2 clinics by 8 days

Clinic 12 and 13 are carried out by visiting Consultants

Patients Referred/seen in 2009 at OPU				
	<i>Clinic 5</i>	<i>Clinic 12</i>	<i>Clinic 13</i>	<i>Total</i>
New Patients Seen	549	240	341	1,130
Follow Ups	992	501	153	1,646
Total	1,541	741	494	2,776

Amputee, Neuro and General Rehabilitation Out-patients

The year 2009 was a year of consolidation for Rehabilitation Out-patients. Both administrative and clinical operations were integrated within ZCH/KGH Rehabilitation Hospital. The unit was involved actively both in finalising the medical brief for the New Rehabilitation Hospital and in defining the vision for the

Rehabilitation Hospital at KGH, while being at the forefront of Physiotherapy Services developments in rehabilitation and disability management.

Total Figures

The total number of new referrals to combined Amputee, Neuro and General Rehabilitation Out-patients for 2009 was 705 new patients, an increase of 114 (appr 18%) over 2008.

The total number of treatments was 7,886 treatment sessions. This compares to 6,718 in 2008, a significant increase of app 16%.

A total of 118 domiciliary visits were performed, up from 90 visits last year. Most of these visits were planned together with other health professionals - in line with developing a comprehensive outreach service.

A total of 2,440 ambulance trips were utilised to transport patients to and from treatment.

The increase in referrals and corresponding increase in treatments follows the trend seen in other years, with possible reasons being increased disability due to increased chances of survival and longevity, increased awareness of the benefits of rehabilitation, and the ever growing expectations of quality of living.

Waiting time for first appointment averaged five days, with most appointments being given over the phone before discharge from hospital.

DR KENNETH GRECH
Permanent Secretary (HECC Sector)

Health, the Elderly and Community Care Sector

Public Health Regulation Division

The Division for Public Health Regulation, apart from the general safeguarding and promotion of public health, is also responsible for the formulation, monitoring and enforcement of national standards for health in both the public and private sector. It is its responsibility to ensure that public health legislation is being adhered to by all concerned and in this regard is responsible for the inspection and licensing of the various entities that provide health care as well as food establishments.

Within the Division there are four departments, namely:

- Department for Environmental Health: responsible for the enforcement of public health legislation as well as environmental issues.
- Department for Health Care Services Standards: responsible for the establishment and monitoring of standards to be adhered to by service providers in the primary, secondary and tertiary care sectors as well as the enforcement of legislation in relation to blood, organs, tissues, and cells.
- Department for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention: responsible for all activities aimed at improving health and the prevention and control of communicable and non-communicable disease.
- Department for Nursing Services Standards: responsible for the establishment and monitoring of nursing care standards in all care sectors.

The Medicines Authority, which also reports to the Director General (Public Health Regulation), is responsible for ensuring the quality, safety and efficacy of medicinal products on the Maltese markets as well as the inspection and licensing of manufacturing and wholesale dealing establishments.

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR GENERAL

Collaboration with the World Health Organisation (WHO)

World Health Organisation Biennial Collaborative Agreement (BCA) 2008-2009.

The Office of the Director General (Public Health Regulation) was responsible for the coordination of a number of projects undertaken by the Health Division through the World Health Organisation Biennial Collaborative Agreement (BCA) 2008-2009. The 2008-2009 BCA projects included a project and seminar on healthy nutrition in schools, the set up of a new database on accidents and injuries, country preparations towards the 5th Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health to be held in Parma, Italy in February 2010, an Environment and Health Performance Review and stakeholder workshop, a workshop for high level health officials on Inter-sectoral working, a National Conference and publication on the Health Effects of Climate Change as well as technical advice by the World Health Organisation on various policy areas including sexual health, environmental health, nutrition and obesity.

World Health Organisation Biennial Collaborative Agreement (BCA) 2009-2010.

The Office of the DG (PHR) also negotiated the terms of reference and areas of cooperation for the World Health Organisation Biennial Collaborative Agreement (BCA) 2009-2010. The new agreement will include a number of projects in the policy areas of pharmaceuticals, health promotion and disease prevention and environmental health.

World Health Organisation Regional Committee Meeting

Representatives from the DG (PHR) office formed part of the Maltese ministerial delegations to the 59th session of the WHO EURO Regional Committee Meeting held in Copenhagen in September 2009. The main discussions during this meeting, where Dr Zsuzsanna Jakab (Hungary) was nominated as the next Regional Director for WHO-EURO centred around the implications of the global economic crisis for health in the Region; health workforce policies, and the implementation of the International Health Regulations (2005). Technical briefings were given on the preparedness for and response to pandemic (H1N1) 2009 and the Fifth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health, to be held in Parma, Italy on 10–12 March 2010.

A resolution was passed during this meeting agreeing that the 62nd session of the WHO-EURO Regional Committee Meeting will be hosted by Malta in September 2012.

Public Health Training Committee

A representative from the Office of the DG (PHR) together with representatives from the Offices of the Directors General (Health Care Services and Strategy and Sustainability) now represent the Employer on this tri-partite Committee, alongside two other representatives from the Malta Association of Public Health Medicine (MAPHM) and two representatives from the University of Malta. The functions of the Public Health Training Committee include advising and recommending to the MAPHM on the competencies and content of the Training Programme, coordination of delivery of the Training Programme, selection, monitoring and evaluation of training attachments and locations, and regularly assess trainees' progress. At the end of the training period, the committee submits its recommendations to the MAPHM regarding the suitability of the trainee for specialist accreditation.

During 2009, there were 12 doctors in training in Public Health Medicine. The PHTC made five recommendations to MAPHM for Specialist registration which was granted to all doctors by the Specialist Accreditation Committee in 2009.

Guidelines for the Prevention of Infective Endocarditis

Revision of the current local infective endocarditis (IE) prophylaxis guidelines was necessary in view of the new guidelines emerging from the British Society for Antimicrobial Chemotherapy (BSAC), the American Heart Association (AHA), the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE), and the European Society of Cardiology (ESC). These guidelines were produced in an advisory capacity so as to assist intended users, namely dentists, health care providers, patients and physicians to make appropriate decisions in the prescription of prophylactic antibiotics. A team of specialists composed of nine members brought with them specific expertise relevant to the prevention and treatment of IE. The team members represented Maltese public health officials, dentists, cardiologists, infectious disease experts and pharmacists spanning areas in research, regulation, policy and service provision. The team was set up by the DG (PHR) in September 2008 and has been operating since then. The main role of the team was to prepare new guidelines for the prevention of infective endocarditis for the people of Malta and these will be published shortly.

National Hypertension Guidelines

These guidelines were produced because the current guidelines on hypertension in Malta detail only the treatment of hypertension and aim at consultant physicians and consultant cardiologists. The Director General (PHR) issued these guidelines in an advisory capacity so as to benefit physicians at primary, secondary and tertiary level, general practitioners, family medicine specialists, clinical dieticians and nurses as well as health and policy-makers. The Task Force Team was set up by the Director General (PHR) in 2008 and has been operating since. The team was composed of seven members, all of whom brought with them specific expertise relevant to the issue of hypertension. The diverse expertise of the members

spanning from research, regulation, policy and service provision were appointed by the DG (PHR). The main role of the team is to prepare hypertension guidelines for the people of Malta and these will be published shortly.

PHARMACEUTICAL UNIT

The Pharmaceutical Unit is responsible for the administration of the technical aspects of legislation and the development of national policies within the various pharmaceutical areas. These policies are developed and implemented with the aim of providing support to medicines' legislation, safeguarding patients' rights and wellbeing, as well as boosting the health care professionals' confidence in the medicinal products available, from their manufacture to administration and use by the patient.

Narcotic Drugs, Psychotic Substances and Precursor Chemicals

NMPAU implements local legislation and fulfils international obligations with respect to narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursor chemicals. A number of reports required by the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) were compiled - namely Forms A/P (four reports), Forms A (four reports), Form B, Form C, Form D and Form P, as well as other INCB, and United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) questionnaires. Other authorisations were issued as follows:

Import Permits for narcotic drugs	21
Import Permits for psychotropic substances	104
Withdrawal Permits	125
New Methylphenidate approvals	140
Renewal of Methylphenidate approvals	330

Together with the Customs Department, the Unit is taking part in an exercise to control precursor chemicals used in the illicit manufacture of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, both physically and by means of adequate legislation.

Authorisation for the Use of Medicines

The Pharmaceutical Unit is responsible for the implementation of the *Guidelines for the supply of medicinal products for human use through processes which are not covered by the Medicines Act, 2003 and its subsidiary legislation*. In 2009 the Unit processed 262 individual requests by prescribers.

REGULATORY COUNCILS

The four regulatory councils namely the Medical Council, the Pharmacy Council, the Council for Nurses and Midwives and the Council for Professions Complementary to Medicine, were set up in terms of the Health Care Professions Act 2003. The principal scope of the Act is to regulate the practice of health care professions in Malta. New registrations affected by each council during 2009 are indicated hereunder:

Medical Council		Professions Complementary to Medicine	
Medical Practitioners (Principal Register)	64	Chiropractor	1
Medical Practitioners (Provisional Register)	54	Dietician	1
Dental Surgeons	11	Environmental Health Officers	8
Pharmacy Council		Medical Laboratory Scientists	10
Pharmacists	23	Nutritionists	4
Pharmacy Technicians	7	Occupational Therapists	15
Nurses and Midwives		Optometrists	1
Nurses	150	Physiotherapists	18
Midwives	10	Podiatrists	8
Specialist Accreditation Committee		Psychotherapists	46
Specialist Register	45	Radiographers	13
Basic Specialist Trainees	17	Speech Language Pathologists	2

Specialist Accreditation Committees (SAC)

The Specialist Accreditation Committees (Medical and Dental) function according to the Health Care Professions Act (HCPA) which came into force on 23 November 2003. Their functions are to issue Certificates of Completion of Specialist Training, to accredit post-graduate training programmes and to accept for registration specialists in the fifty medical specialities and two dental specialities recognised under the HCPA. The SAC is advisory to the Minister and the Medical Council on issues concerning postgraduate specialist training and registration.

The Medical SAC met 18 times during 2009. The Committee has continued to accredit postgraduate training programmes proposed by the relevant Specialist Associations. The major training programmes are being delivered under the supervision of Speciality Training Committees and Postgraduate Training Coordinators. Certificates of Completion of Specialist training continue to be distributed - 24 CCSTs were issued in 2009. The SAC website can be accessed at <http://www.sahha.gov.mt/entities/sacmedical.html>.

The Dental SAC met twice in 2009. Certificates of Specialist Status to those on the specialist lists were distributed. The Specialist Lists in the two dental specialities were put online on the webpage of the Medical Council. No new applications for entry to the Specialist Lists in oral surgery and orthodontics were received in 2009. The two training programmes were formulated by the Dental Association of Malta and approved by the SAC. The training programme in orthodontics commenced in 2009. The SAC website can be accessed at <http://www.sahha.gov.mt/entities/sacdental.html>.

Appeals Committee

The Appeals Committee for health care professions envisaged by the HCPA was constituted in 2004. The Committee is composed of members appointed by the Prime Minister and elected representatives from among health care professionals. Its functions are to hear and decide on decisions of relevant Councils or Specialist Accreditation Committees relating to the registration of health care professionals. The Secretariat is provided by staff from the Office of the Director General (PHR).

Number of cases dealt with during 2009

Pharmacy Council	1
Specialist Accreditation Committees	8
Council for Nurses and Midwives	7
Council for Professions Complementary to Medicine	3

Twinning Light Project Free Movement of Healthcare Professionals

Over 2008 and 2009 the Office of the DG (PHR) successfully implemented a Twinning Light project under the Transitional Facility Programme 2006 for Malta. The aim of the project was to seek assistance in capacity building and technical assistance for the five regulatory councils responsible for the regulation of healthcare professionals. The objectives were to develop the necessary systems and procedures to implement European Union Directive 2005/36 in an effective and efficient manner, and to inform and educate healthcare professionals on the associated issues. The final seminar organised in connection with this project was held in 2009. Details and training material are available on the website of the project www.sahha.gov.mt/entities/freemovement.html.

The Quality Assurance Initiative Adjudicating Committee

This Committee is responsible for the Merit Award Scheme initiated by the Government-Medical Association of Malta agreement of February 2002. The Merit Award Scheme was set up to reward good practice. As stated in the agreement “it recognises the need for specialists to keep abreast of the rapid progress made in the various fields of medical and health specialisation and the effort it takes for such specialists to keep themselves abreast of developments, to improve professional standards and to provide

quality assurance in the health system". The Chairperson and Secretary of this Committee are staff members from the Office of the Director General (PHR). Over 200 proposals for projects were submitted from clinical chairmen, consultants, resident specialists, senior general practitioners and general practitioners in February 2009. Final reports will be submitted by the end of February 2010. Project reports for 2008 were assessed according to published criteria.

Quality in Health Care

Clinical Audit Training

As part of the quality assurance role of the Office of the Director General, training seminars on Clinical Audit for various healthcare professionals were held in 2009. These consisted of didactic talks, set exercises and group sessions.

Patient Safety Initiative

The Ministry of Health became a signatory to the World Alliance for Patient Safety which is a World Health Organisation initiative in 2007. This initiative aims at promoting a culture of safety within the healthcare system and developing mechanisms enhancing patient safety. It aims at reducing the amount of injuries, illnesses and even deaths suffered by patients while receiving healthcare. With this aim, the healthcare system is committed to reduce healthcare associated infections. A concerted campaign on Hand Hygiene within Mater Dei hospital is ongoing. The other ongoing patient safety initiative is the one related to the *Safe Surgery Saves Lives* initiative.

Influenza Pandemic Committee

A pandemic committee was set up in 2005 under the chairmanship of the Director General to formulate, amongst other things, strategies for the dealing with the A/H1N1 pandemic influenza. In 2008 the committee started meeting more frequently to update the Influenza Pandemic plan which was originally prepared in September 2005. When the World Health Organisation changed the alert to pandemic phase, the committee started the process to implement the country's Pandemic Plan, its main objectives being:

- Try to prevent/contain the importation of virus into the country;
- Ensure adequate Surveillance to detect cases as early as possible to contain the virus;
- Minimise morbidity and mortality related to H1N1 in the Maltese population;
- Adequately prepare the country to timely implementation of specific activities required in the various phases of pandemic phasing;
- Provide treatment and care to all those who fall ill with pandemic influenza;
- Ensure that essential services are maintained;
- Take all the necessary measures to reduce the spread of the disease;
- Provide accurate, timely and up to date information to health care professionals, the general public and the media throughout the pandemic;
- Minimise the economic impact and social disruption caused by the pandemic

Inter alia the work of the Committee throughout the pandemic included:

- deciding when to move from one response phase to another: Containment, Mitigation, Treatment and Vaccination phase;
- deciding the logistics, human resources, equipment and other necessary requirements involved with implementing each phase;
- decisions regarding the procurement of antivirals and vaccines;
- decisions required in implementing the Vaccine and Treatment Strategies;
- decisions regarding the provision of accurate and timely, up to date information to health care professionals, the general public and the media;
- regular liaison with the Mater Dei Hospital Influenza Committee and the Interministerial Committee;

- organising regular press conferences and press releases - members of the committee regularly attended Radio and TV programmes to provide information to the general public.

The committee met 17 times in 2009.

EU Health Security Communicators Network

The role of the Division's representative on the EU Health Security Communicators Network (HSComNet) is, *inter alia*, to serve as a focal point between the Division and the EU in terms of communication where health crises are concerned. The representative is also responsible for the dissemination of all transmitted documents by the EU health agencies to the Division. The Division's representative has, during the year under review, attended meetings of the HSComNet and participated in workshops organised by SANCO and ECDC

Directors meetings

Regular bi-weekly meetings were held with the heads of directorates and entities falling within the Public Health Regulation Division. The meetings were chaired by the Director General and served as a forum for discussion and formulation of policies, information sharing and brainstorming in general. The meetings also serve as a means to coordinate better the work within the Division itself.

Collaboration with other Departments

The Office of the Director General and its underlying directorates collaborated, extended support and cooperation, as well as held discussions on a regular basis with other departments and stakeholders insofar as public health policy and standards are concerned.

Advisory Committee on Immunisation Policy

The advisory committee on the Immunisation Policy, set up in November 2007, has the following functions:

- to promote the understanding of, and support for, the Immunisation Programme among professionals and the public at large
- to keep abreast with the latest research in vaccine development
- to advise the Superintendent of Public Health with respect to vaccination programme priorities in the short, medium and long term
- to develop written recommendations for the routine administration of vaccines
- to issue guidelines regarding dosages, periodicity and contraindications applicable to individual vaccines
- to tender advice as may be requested by the Superintendent of Public Health.

This committee met nine times in 2009 and managed to achieve a number of recommendations and events during its tenure including:

- Recommendations on the storage of vaccines at pharmacy level;
- Recommendations on influenza vaccination;
- Recommendations on the Influenza vaccination campaign of November 2009;
- Recommendation for early vaccination against seasonal influenza;
- Advice to the SPH as requested;
- Recommendations to improve methods of the reporting of vaccinations given in the private sector;
- Recommendation to include the dispatching of vaccination reports for children reaching their 2nd birthday via the new e-health portal;
- Recommendation to vaccinate all newborn babies belonging to mothers hailing from countries at high risk of tuberculosis disease, with BCG and to screen children under 5 years of age residing at Open Centres for HIV and vaccinating with BCG;

- Updating of the ACIP page on the NIS website in the e-health portal;
- Ongoing discussion and scientific research regarding revision of the current practice of universal BCG vaccination in 12-year old children;
- Recommendations to re-introduce the Tetanus Monovalent Vaccine into the national schedule;
- Discussions and scientific research on the cost-effectiveness of universal vaccination against Meningitis C disease - the conclusion was that this would not be cost-effective at this point in time;
- Recommendation to increase awareness of vaccination against pneumococcal disease for children under 5 years of age in view of the current H1N1 pandemic;
- Recommendation for subscription to the scientific journal *Vaccine*;
- Evaluation of the report by the Infection Control Consultant to introduce Varicella vaccination for all ongoing health workers.

Obesity Strategy

During 2009 three workshops were held prior to the drafting of an obesity strategy. The workshops focused on the stakeholders of nutrition and physical activity and on health care services oriented towards the overweight and obese (children and adults).

Funding

After several meetings with officials from the Ministry of Finance, the division was allocated the sum of €150,000 in the budgetary estimates for 2010.

LEGAL OFFICE

The Legal Office within the Health Division provides legal assistance to all the bodies which fall under the aegis of the Chief Medical Officer and the Ministry for Health. This assistance comprises legal advice, drafting both primarily and subsidiary legislation, legal assistance in Superior, Inferior courts and in arbitration tribunals, drafting and processing of contracts of patients and other third persons. Cases being disputed in court cover a wide scenario of activities such as negligence, health and safety issues, promotions to money due by and or from the Division.

Another service offered by the office is that of the affidavits. The main users of this service are the doctors. This service ensures that doctors do not absent themselves from work to go to court to give evidence, hence ensuring that provision the health care is not disrupted.

When one compares the previous years with last year, the legal office received a considerable increase in claims regarding negligent allegations in the health sector for the access of medical records, allegations of unauthorised treatment on minors and claims of breaches in health and safety at work.

Pending cases

Civil Court First Hall	40
Court of Magistrates (Malta)	2
Court of Appeal – Superior	3
Court of Magistrates (Gozo)	1
Civil Arbitration	2

Others

Judicial letters Magistrates Malta	50
Affidavits (Doctors)	140
Affidavits (plaintiffs or defendants)	17
Judicial Letters (Civil Court 1 st Hall)	12
Concluded Cases	5
Garnishee Warrant	22
Garnishee Counter Warrant	5

Civil Court 1 st Hall Applications	15
Criminal Court Application	3
Court of Magistrates Applications	25
Applications for Jurors	20
Court of Appeal Applications	2
Health Inspectors Applications	50
Civil Court 1 st Hall Counter Protest	5
Civil Court 1 st Hall Defendant note	1
Civil Court 1 st Hall Reply	3
Civil Court 1 st Hall Submission Notes	4
Court of Magistrates Submission Notes	6
Civil Court 1 st Hall Schedule Deposits	17
Civil Court 1 st Hall Withdrawal Schedule	
Deposits	3
Health Inspectors replies	6
Court of Magistrates Counter Protest	6
Legal Letters	439
Drafting of Legal Notices	22

DEPARTMENT FOR HEALTH PROMOTION AND DISEASE PREVENTION

The Department of Health Promotion and Disease Prevention has the main aim to protect and promote the health of people on the Maltese Islands by:

- empowering individuals to adopt healthier lifestyles;
- advocating the creation of supportive environments conducive to health;
- carrying out effective surveillance and control of communicable diseases;
- developing strategies for reducing the burden of communicable and non communicable disease.

The main tasks of this department are to:

- enhance knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and values that are conducive to good health;
- educate and empower the public to adopt healthy behaviour, enhance personal skills, promote environmental change and advocate lifestyle policies favourable to health;
- monitor health and disease trends and provide the necessary input to the development of policies in respect of communicable and non communicable diseases;
- study ways for promoting better nutrition; preventing excessive weight, obesity and chronic disease;
- formulate effective health promotion measures, in cooperation with the key stakeholders, by applying a multisectoral approach;
- produce publications and use media on a range of health topics;
- formulate and regularly update national policy for communicable disease and ensure its implementation
- carry out field investigation and epidemiological control of communicable diseases;
- minimise the transmission of and mortality from communicable diseases;
- prepare operational policies and strategies aimed at reducing non communicable diseases and their impact on morbidity and mortality;
- reduce the incidence, morbidity and mortality from non communicable diseases;
- formulate contingency plans for potential epidemics and prepare national plans for biological threats to public health.

Activities are categorised under three units:

- Infectious Disease Prevention and Control Unit
- Health Promotion Unit, and
- Non-communicable Disease Prevention and Control Unit

HEALTH PROMOTION UNIT (HPU)

Initiatives

Nutrition

A number of campaigns were held throughout 2009. These included:

- *Promotion of fruit and vegetables: Haxix u Frott – Hamsa trid tghodd?:* The Fruit and Vegetable campaign aimed at increasing the consumption of fruit and vegetables among the general population by raising awareness of the importance of fruit and vegetables in the diet. It was also meant to complement the introduction of the School Fruit Scheme. The media resources, particularly the jingle for radio and television, proved to be successful with different age groups.
- *Salt initiative: A Pinch of Salt:* A Salt campaign was held to raise awareness of the salt content in foods and the need to not add salt to already prepared food. The Salt initiative comprised an advertising campaign as well as working with the food production industry. The advertising campaign ran for a month and proved successful in being recalled by various targeted audiences after a period of three months.
- *Obesity Week:* A week-long campaign was held specifically encouraging weight loss in obese and overweight individuals. The campaign consisted of a television and radio advert, as well as a number of talks in the community. The campaign was also widely covered in the media with the participation of nutritionists in various locally produced magazine programmes.
- *Obesity Project at Dingli Local Council:* A pilot project was organised in collaboration with the Dingli Local Council for a year-long Obesity project within their locality. The project included a country walk within their locality, a presentation on obesity prevention by a nutritionist, as well as cooking sessions both for parents and school children. The Council decided to hold the walk on a long-term basis, and it is still an ongoing activity to date.
- *Collaboration with Ministry of Resources and Rural Affairs:* The Health Promotion Unit collaborated extensively with the MRRRA in the production of a number of leaflets of information on olive oil, fish and tomatoes.
- **International Cooperation in Nutrition:**
 - WHO/EC DG SANCO joint project: monitoring progress on diet, physical activity and preventing obesity in the EU - throughout March and April, research and intersectoral working intensified on the WHO reporting template. The completed template that covered Work Packages 1 and 2 of the WHO/DG SANCO project was then sent to WHO.
 - WHO Global nutrition policy review 2009: WHO Headquarters are undertaking a Global Nutrition Policy Review to map existing national policies addressing and/or influencing nutrition to enable an improved response to global public health and nutrition challenges. Upon request, two questionnaires (one focuses on the International Code on Marketing of Breast milk Substitutes and the other on Infant and Child Nutrition (i.e. Modules 2 and 3) were compiled and returned to WHO.
- **Local meetings related to nutrition:** The Health Promotion Unit actively participates in meetings of the Food Safety Commission and the Meals Board contributing towards policy issues in both instances.
- **ESAN Meeting:** The Health Promotion Unit hosted a meeting of the ESAN project with participants from member states taking part. The European Salt Action Network looks into the salt content in foods and collaborates with the industry in lowering salt content in various foodstuffs.

Breastfeeding

The Health Promotion Unit joined with Cinemum for an event to encourage breastfeeding for mothers emphasising on the benefits of breastfeeding. A seminar to encourage breastfeeding in migrants was planned throughout the year. This event is to be held early in 2010.

Physical Activity

- *Get Malta Moving Initiative:* This year's WHO *Move for Health Day* under the slogan of *Get Malta Moving*, involved the participation of local councils to organise Physical Activity events during the month

of May in their locality. All the local councils of Malta & Gozo were contacted and four local councils responded to the request. A report of the activities was later sent to the WHO. The Officer working on physical activity gave a presentation during the MASEM seminar held at Corinthia Hotel, Attard to doctors, physiotherapists and coaches on the professional advice given re physical activity.

- *Publications:*
 - *Physical Activity: A Guide for Professionals* accompanied by a set of two posters, was mail-shot to the following professional people: doctors, pharmacists, PE teachers, gym instructors and coaches. This booklet gives an overview of PA to professionals and qualified experts from the Health, Education, Sports and Leisure Sectors. Although the Get Active – Get Healthy Campaign was never officially launched, the booklets and the posters were finally sent during April.
 - ‘*Ċaqraq għal Sahhtek*’ was reprinted.
 - The comic booklet titled, *Let's Get Active – Let's Have Fun* was launched at Attard Primary School. The story of this comic is intended to help children change their lifestyle from that of a sedentary one, to a more active one and at the same time have more fun. The comic is being distributed to all 5th and 6th year classes of state, private and church schools.
- *Media:* a number of articles were published in local magazines and newspapers on the subject of physical activity. Television and radio interviews also formed part of increasing awareness about the subject.
- The *Be Active Helpline* is available for people wanting to ask questions related to physical activity or to discuss any issues on the subject.
- The Health Promotion Unit participated in the organisation of the President's Fun Run and gave suggestions as to the health aspect of the whole event. A logo for employees of the Ministry was designed and printed on a T-shirt used specifically by the staff.

The School Setting

The Education/Health Committee was set up to discuss issues relative to both departments and establish collaboration in the two sectors. A member of the committee was invited to present future projects to the College Principals at one of their monthly meetings. Throughout 2009, the Committee met monthly and discussed collaboration on the following issues:

- The AH1N1 and its effect in schools
- The Health Behaviour of School Aged Children study
- The Nutrition Friendly School Initiative
- The Be Cool, Be Healthy initiative
- The way forward in Nutrition Education and the HELP document
- Tobacco Education within Schools

Fruit in School Scheme

Malta is participating in the EU funded *Fruit in School Scheme* to be launched in 2010, with the lead Ministry being the Ministry of Resources and Rural Affairs. The project aims at changing the behaviour of school-aged children with regard to the consumption of more fruit and vegetables. The role of the Health Promotion Unit in the scheme is to ensure good quality produce is given to the children and will be evaluating the project. A competition was held among school children for the best poster. The winning poster will be the design used to market the scheme in schools.

Two officers presented a poster for the European Fruit in Schools Conference and the officers were invited to participate in the conference.

Nutrition Friendly School Initiative

The Nutrition Friendly School Initiative was launched during a seminar for pilot schools. Ms Trudy Wijnhoven, Technical Officer, Nutrition Surveillance at WHO EURO was the keynote speaker at the seminar. The project aims at creating a healthy nutrition environment in all schools throughout Europe,

and accredits those schools that attain levels of commitment in this regard. Three schools were nominated as the pilot schools for the project with the dissemination to all schools within the next two years.

Two officers attended training in the NFSI methodology held in Durham earlier in the year.

Health Behaviour of School aged Children Study

The HPU planned the next local study of the Health Behaviour of School-aged Children to be held in 2010. The Unit actively participated in both meetings organised by the HBSC Secretariat in May and November.

The Unit held a number of meetings with representatives of the Curia on the inclusion of sexual health questions and family questions in the next research tool, under the direction of the Social Affairs Committee of Parliament. A consensus was reached on the wording and inclusion of the questions.

Tobacco

Research/Policy/Legislation

The Department contributed to the drafting of the Tobacco Smoking Control Act-CAP 315 as well as the regulations of 2008 on the use of colour photographs or other illustrations as health warnings on tobacco packages.

Projects and Initiatives

The HPU is an active participant in the *European Network of Quitlines* (ENQ) together with other European member states. This is possible through the ongoing telephone support service that is being offered through our local *Quitline*. The primary objective of the ENQ is to contribute to and promote health improvement and reduce morbidity and premature mortality by bringing together experienced and newer European *Quitlines*. The ENQ facilitates the sharing of knowledge, best practice, experience and a supporting network for all its members.

Carbon Monoxide Testing: The unit actively supports the EU tobacco campaign with ongoing *COMets* testing. The aim behind this initiative is to aid in the quitting process by helping smokers to visualise what effects smoking has on their body, and serve as a follow-up to quitters by demonstrating the drop in CO level following cessation. It encourages existing smokers to quit and promotes tobacco free environment. The campaign is intended to reach out to a wide spectrum of the local population. Participation was solicited throughout various community events that included:

- Puttinu Cares Football Marathon - 24 -26 April
- Powerboats Championships - 8 May
- World No Tobacco Day Paceville and Valletta - 29 and 31 May
- Music Festival Qormi - 4 July
- Skola Sajf - 15 – 17 September
- *Towards a Smokefree World* in collaboration with MMSA Valletta
- Malta International Air Show - 26-27 September

During these events, video tips and messages were taken in order to be placed on the HELP website so that other smokers would be able to relate to the positive messages given by quitters and possibly quit as well. All promotional advertising and campaigns included the Malta *Quitline* and *Freephone* numbers. Support can also be obtained through logging on to the website *HELP Campaign*.

The European *HELP: For a Life Without Tobacco* anti-smoking campaign that was set up in 2004 consists of a public relations campaign, an advertising campaign and a website with help on how to quit. A European Tobacco Media Observatory will systematically collect and analyse European anti-tobacco communications in the media. The HELP campaign has been devised by a consortium of health experts

and media companies. The media companies delivering the campaign are working in close collaboration with the Health Promotion Department and the European Network for Smoking Prevention (ENSP). The main efforts are based on the issues of prevention, cessation and passive smoking. This publicity campaign also promotes tobacco free lifestyles to young people and young adults. Press coverage that incorporate the local *Quitline and Freephone* numbers, publications, advertising and other promotional material together with a website which includes a support service that can support and assist smokers to quit. *ENSP The network* brings together Speakers and Presiding Officers of the European Union to exchange information and express views on matters of common concern.

Anti-tobacco public education and communication

On Europa Day, Creativity and Innovation, a poster entitled *Innovative Advocacy for Tobacco Control in the European Union* was presented. This event was held on 9 May at St Georges Square in Valletta . This poster included the comparative data results of carbon monoxide tests that were carried out in Malta the previous years. Two adverts (one focusing on youths and cessation and the other on passive smoking) that were used as promotional material on the television were screened .

Collaboration Work with other Public Bodies

Lombard Bank Malta PLC ‘Anti-Smoking Campaign’ held a competition between different schools and those willing to participate were asked to produce an *Anti-Smoking* video clip. The officer working on tobacco was a member of the adjudication board for the selection of the best DVD produced by students. Other members were two officers from Lombard Bank and another member from the Education Division.

Training the trainers

The department is progressing in the planning and implementation of new measures to further be able to deal with the implementation of a Health Promoting Hospital strategy within Mater Dei Hospital. The officer working on the issue of tobacco is starting by training the trainers in order to be able to train staff in dealing with this important concern, both in terms of cessation and compliance of an eventual Smokefree hospital, in collaboration with the Smoking and Health Committee.

Local Campaigns and Press Conferences

The *World No Tobacco Day* Press Conference and Exhibition with the slogan *Ir-Rejalta* was held at the Ministry for Social Policy. This press conference included an exhibition, together with the launch of three new booklets to help smokers quit. The department introduced a freephone line in order to facilitate access to the general public, especially those smokers who want to stop smoking. This exhibition, which consisted of 15 posters each depicting three pictorial health warnings, was open from 27 May to 8 June. On 31 May, *World No Tobacco Day*, the Exhibition was also open and in Freedom Square close to the premises, there was Carbon Monoxide testing in collaboration with the EU Campaign *HELP*, where the Help tent was put up for this purpose. For the duration of the exhibition, there was an ongoing opinion poll of pictorial warnings, open for all those who visited the exhibits.

Media coverage

The Unit took part on a regular basis in a number of TV and radio programmes..

Publications

A series of three publications were produced, aimed at offering all the support that a potential quitter needs in order to stop smoking.

Skolasajf

During *Skolasajf*, facilitators ran a programme on Tobacco and its harmful effects for children attending summer school. The facilitators were trained by the Health Promotion Unit in the methodology of delivery of Tobacco education to young children as well as the way in which to present the correct facts.

A competition for the best poster was also organised and two events, one in Malta and one in Gozo, were held to promote Tobacco Education.

Alcohol

A *Drink Drive* campaign was held throughout December, to once again remind people to avoid consuming alcohol if driving. Priority was given to advertising on the radio as the medium which the younger age-group tend to prefer.

Sexual Health

Malta is a partner in the EU funded H-Cube project addressing the three sexually transmitted infections; HIV, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C. The project targets mainly young people, men who have sex with men and young migrants. During 2009, a literature review was carried out to collate all available information and data available locally.

The Sexual Health Policy was finalised and the action plan submitted.

An advertising campaign was held in January, promoting the message of abstinence, be faithful and use condoms. The cartoon advert ran for two months on bus shelters in areas frequented by young people.

World AIDS Day was commemorated through the organisation of a press conference addressing not only the media but also a large number of young people. The event was held at MCAST in Paola and highlighted the reality of HIV transmission and modes of prevention of spread. An AIDS advert was launched during this event, which targeted young people and depicted the same message. This promo was entered into a competition held by German authorities and was aired widely on local television. A poster having the message *If you are sexually active, protect yourself* and addressing young people in particular, was present during December in bus shelters throughout the island.

The HPU was represented at the Sexual Health Forum hosted by the European Commission and held in Brussels. The focus of the meeting was to plan a strategy for all member states on the sexual health of the European population.

Prostate Cancer

The Department for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention joined with the World Foundation of Urology to launch the first prostate cancer awareness campaign in Malta. The main aim of this campaign is raise awareness about the cancer of the prostate, being the commonest cancer in males in Malta and to encourage prevention measures.

This information campaign included a spot for television and posters in pharmacies, clinics, health centres and local councils. The main message in these mediums is to motivate men to take care of their health by:

- Visiting their doctor who will assess them and their risk;
- Encourage a healthy lifestyle which includes a healthy diet and regular physical activity.

World Health Day

The theme put forward by the World Health Organisation on the occasion of the 2008 World Health Day focused on the need to protect health from the adverse effects of climate change. “Protecting health from climate change” put health at the centre of the global dialogue about climate change.

The Health Division took the initiative to raise awareness about the effects of climate change by launching a leaflet for the general public. Mater Dei Hospital also took the initiative sponsored by GO and Nature Trust, to plant indigenous trees and shrubs on Mater Dei Grounds.

Euro-melanoma Day

A campaign was set up in collaboration with the Department for Dermatology, to increase awareness about the harmful effects of the sun in increasing the incidence of melanoma. This included posters and billboards.

Another event was held in a primary school whereby children were involved in fun activities related to increased awareness about the effects of the sun.

European Immunisation Week

The European Immunisation week was also held in Malta, based on the launch by the World Health Organisation with the main goals of:

- raising public awareness of the benefits of immunisation;
- supporting national immunisation systems; and
- providing a framework for mobilising public and political support for governmental efforts to protect the public through universal childhood immunisation.

The EIW social media campaign is spearheaded by a video which was launched on YouTube.

Physiotherapy Day: Movement for Health Campaign

The Malta Association of Physiotherapists in collaboration with the Health Promotion Unit organised a Movement for Health Campaign during September. This campaign is designed to encourage the general public in engaging a healthy active lifestyle.

World Glaucoma Day

The second edition of the World Glaucoma Day was held throughout the world on 12 March. The activities included:

- a public lecture for the general public on Friday 13 March at Mater Dei Hospital, in conference room 3, (above foyer) at 12MD;
- public awareness campaign at Mater Dei Hospital Out patients foyer;
- free glaucoma screening day at B’Kara Health Centre;
- setting up a Patient Support Group.

World Health Day

World Health Day is an annual event which takes place on April 7 to draw attention to particular priorities with regard to global health. The theme chosen by the World Health Organisation for 2009 was *Save Lives: Make Hospitals Safe in Emergencies*. A press conference was held to raise awareness on this day.

World Heart Day

The World Health Organisation this year joined forces with the World Heart Federation and the World Economic Forum to celebrate World Heart Day on 27 September 2009. The Department of Health Promotion and Disease Prevention launched a campaign to encourage the population of Malta to adopt healthier lifestyles, since small changes can make huge differences to the lives of many. The Department emphasised all the factors that can influence a healthy heart. The lifestyle of each individual depends on choices that the person makes in their day-to-day lives.

World Diabetes Day

An awareness campaign was launched on World Diabetes Day, to encourage people to test for diabetes and to start taking care of their condition at an early stage. A leaflet was distributed to help diabetics take care of themselves.

Outreach Activities

The Health Promotion Unit participated in the following activities held in the Community setting:

- The International Trade Fair held at Ta'Qali.
- Careers' Fair at the Mediterranean Conference Hall
- Fresher's week at Upper Lyceum, Msida
- World Children's Day at the Palace, Valletta
- Science & Technology Fair at the University of Malta
- World Consumer Day held at Ta' Qali on 15 March
- Europe Day held in Valletta.

During these activities, members of staff answered queries by the public, distributed material and generally interacted with visitors in promoting the services by the Unit and healthier living concepts. The stands depicted the various campaigns organised by the Unit and the health messages that the Unit needs to promote through posters and activities.

Media advertising

A number of new adverts for television and radio were produced during the year. These included:

- Prostate cancer
- *Haxix u Frott – Hamsa trid Tghodd*
- Healthy Living – *Bidla għal Hajja Ġdida*
- Obesity
- Drink & Drive 2009 radio advert

NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PREVENTION AND CONTROL UNIT (NCCU)

Non-communicable diseases put a significant health and economic burden on the population of Malta. Evidence shows that major chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, mental ill health and cancer result from certain lifestyle related factors, namely unhealthy diet, physical inactivity, tobacco use and alcohol abuse, which are in turn related to clear biological risk factors, namely obesity, hypertension, hyperlipidaemia and carbohydrate abnormalities.

All these related factors depend on a solid socioeconomic environment which includes the control of poverty, education, employment and social inequalities.

By means of appropriate strategic approaches, incorporating population risk and individual high risk reduction, a referral support system, a health information system, the empowerment of a primary health

care system and health promotion initiatives, the implementation of a non-communicable disease strategy for Malta may be achieved through policy, capacity building, surveillance and dissemination.

The strategy was sent for consultation during 2009 and comments were incorporated. The strategy was also updated with the latest HIS data and will be launched in 2010.

INFECTIOUS DISEASE PREVENTION AND CONTROL UNIT (IDCU)

During 2009 the Infectious Disease Prevention and Control Unit (IDCU) maintained its primary role of surveillance, investigation and control of infectious diseases notified to the Department.

Notifiable Diseases

Statutorily notifiable infectious diseases are reported to the IDCU by medical practitioners, the microbiology and virology laboratories at Mater Dei Hospital and other medical diagnostic laboratories. The data presented in this report may be subject to changes according to further investigation results. Tabulated data are indicated in tables Section A to Section C:

Section A: Confirmed individual case reports, by sex and by quarter

(Q1: Jan-Mar; Q2: Apr-Jun; Q3: Jul-Sep; Q4: Oct-Dec)

Note: Except where otherwise indicated, figures refer to resident cases.

Notifiable Disease	T	M	F	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Comments
AIDS	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	imported; irregular immigrant
Chickenpox	163	83	80	80	59	14	10	
<i>non-resident cases</i>	5	3	2	1	2	2	-	
Chlamydia	58	35	23	21	7	17	13	
<i>non-resident cases</i>	2	1	-	1	-	-	1	1 case imported; gender of 1 case is unknown
Erysipelas	1	1	-	-	1	-	-	
<i>non-resident cases</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Food borne illnesses, <i>Campylobacter</i>	126	80	46	19	39	33	35	2 cases imported; all individual cases; 5 separate outbreaks affected 15 cases
<i>non-resident cases</i>	1	-	1	-	-	1	-	
Food borne illnesses, <i>E. Coli</i>	38	23	15	3	5	20	10	all individual cases; 1 outbreak involved 4 persons
<i>non-resident cases</i>	2	2	-	2	-	-	-	
Food borne illnesses, <i>Salmonella</i>	109	61	48	22	19	45	23	1 case imported; all individual cases; 14 separate outbreaks involved an estimated 88 persons
<i>non-resident cases</i>	5	3	2	2	-	3	-	
Food borne illnesses, <i>Scombrototoxic</i>	4	4	-	-	-	3	1	
<i>non-resident cases</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Food borne illnesses, <i>Shigella</i>	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	
<i>non-resident cases</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Food borne illnesses, <i>Unspecified</i>	30	18	12	7	6	7	10	all individuals; 24 outbreaks involving 107 persons
<i>non-resident cases</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Giardiasis	2	-	2	2	-	-	-	
<i>non-resident cases</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Gonorrhoea	63	46	16	24	8	15	16	gender of 1 case unknown
<i>non-resident cases</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Hepatitis A	6	4	2	1	1	2	2	included 1 cluster of 3 persons
<i>non-resident cases</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Hepatitis B	5	5	-	1	2	-	2	2 cases imported
<i>non-resident cases</i>	1	1	-	-	1	-	-	
Hepatitis C	4	2	2	1	-	1	2	1 case imported
<i>non-resident cases</i>	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	imported

Notifiable Disease	T	M	F	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Comments
HIV	8	4	2	1	1	2	2	1 case imported; 2 occurring in Maltese probably locally acquired; 6 in foreign residents. It is thought that of the total 11 cases, 4 were acquired through MSM and the rest through heterosexual contacts.
<i>non-resident cases</i>	3	4	1	4	1	-	-	1 case imported
Legionnaire's Disease	4	3	1	1	2	1	-	
<i>non-resident cases</i>	3	1	2	-	1	-	2	1 case imported
Leishmaniasis, Cutaneous	14	10	4	3	2	8	1	
<i>non-resident cases</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Leishmaniasis, Visceral	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	
<i>non-resident cases</i>	1	-	1	-	1	-	-	
Leptospirosis	1	1	-	-	-	1	1	
<i>non-resident cases</i>	2	1	1	-	1	1	-	
Malaria	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	imported
<i>non-resident cases</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Measles	1	1	-	-	1	-	-	
<i>non-resident cases</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Meningitis, Other bacterial	9	6	3	1	1	3	4	
<i>non-resident cases</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Meningococcal, Meningitis	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
<i>non-resident cases</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Meningococcal, Septicaemia	6	4	2	5	1	-	-	1 case deceased
<i>non-resident cases</i>	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	deceased
Mumps	1	1	-	-	1	-	-	
<i>non-resident cases</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Scarlet fever	100	50	50	27	67	3	3	
<i>non-resident cases</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Shingles, Herpes Zoster	39	17	22	15	10	3	11	
<i>non-resident cases</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Streptococcus Pneumoniae	7	4	3	4	2	-	1	
<i>non-resident cases</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Syphilis Latent	11	9	2	2	1	7	1	1 case imported
<i>non-resident cases</i>	2	2	-	1	-	1	-	
Syphilis Primary	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	
<i>non-resident cases</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Syphilis Secondary	3	3	-	-	1	1	1	1 case imported
<i>non-resident cases</i>	2	2	-	2	-	-	-	
Tuberculosis, Non-Pulmonary	5	4	1	-	1	2	2	
<i>non-resident cases</i>	12	9	3	2	5	1	4	imported
Tuberculosis, Pulmonary	10	7	3	3	1	2	4	
<i>non-resident cases</i>	22	21	1	9	5	7	1	
Typhus, Murine	2	-	2	-	1	-	1	
<i>non-resident cases</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Typhus, Tick-borne	1	-	1	-	1	-	-	
<i>non-resident cases</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	

Section B: Cases involved in outbreaks, by sex and by quarter

(Q1: Jan-Mar; Q2: Apr-Jun; Q3: Jul-Sep; Q4: Oct-Dec)

The figures in brackets indicate the number of implicated outbreaks.

Notifiable Disease	Total	M	F	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Remarks
Chickenpox (15)	34	14	20	24	8	-	2	Include 12 clusters of 2 cases, 2 clusters of 3 cases and one cluster of 4 cases.
<i>Non-residents</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Food borne illness, <i>Campylobacter</i> (5)	15	8	7	4	-	8	3	
<i>Non-residents</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Food borne illness, <i>E. Coli</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
<i>Non-residents (1)</i>	4	-	4	-	4	-	-	
Foodborne illness, <i>Giardiasis</i> (1)	3	1	2	-	-	-	3	
<i>Non-residents</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Food borne illness, <i>Salmonella</i> (12)	48	17	31	4	11	15	18	
<i>Non-residents (2)</i>	40	10	10	-	-	20	20	The gender distribution of one outbreak

								is unknown.
Food borne illness, <i>Unspecified</i> (20)	65	30	35	24	20	6	15	
<i>Non-residents</i> (4)	42	39	3	2	38	-	2	
Hepatitis A (1)	3	2	1	-	-	-	3	
<i>Non-residents</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Legionnaire's Disease	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
<i>Non-residents</i> (1)	2	2	-	-	-	-	2	
Norovirus, <i>Gastroenteritis</i> (1)	3	-	3	3	-	-	-	
<i>Non-residents</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Scarlet Fever (8)	16	3	13	4	10	-	2	These include 8 clusters of 3 cases.
<i>Non-residents</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Staphylococcus Aureus (1)	2	1	1	-	-	2	-	
<i>Non-residents</i>								

Section C: Reported deaths from Notifiable Infectious Diseases

During 2009 there were 5 deaths from notifiable diseases:

Notifiable Disease	Total	Remarks
Haemophilus Influenzae	1	
Leptospirosis	1	This case occurred in a non-resident.
Meningitis, <i>Other Bacterial</i>	1	
Meningococcal, <i>Septicaemia</i>	1	This case occurred in a non-resident.
Meningococcal, <i>Septicaemia</i>	1	

General note on Notifiable Diseases

- *Food-borne Illness Outbreaks*: Notified food-borne outbreaks and clusters have, in 2009, affected about 310 people (241 in 2008). These outbreaks show a predominant association with households (29%), while 20% and 11% originated from restaurants and institutions respectively. Barbecues were responsible for 7 % of the outbreaks while hotels were responsible for 4 %.
- *Acute Flaccid Paralysis*: Active surveillance of Acute Flaccid Paralysis continued throughout the year with reporting to the WHO. There were no cases of AFP in children <15 years reported in 2009.
- *Legionnaire's Disease*: In 2009 there were nine cases of Legionnaire's disease reported to IDCU - 7 cases were sporadic, amongst whom 4 were Maltese and who acquired the infection through local residences (households); while three occurred in foreigners whose infection may be associated with travel to local hotels. All were diagnosed and confirmed through urinary antigen testing. There was another cluster of two tourists from a single hotel. All the foreigners except one were reported through the European Working Group on Legionella Infections. They were all duly investigated and the reports were sent to EWGLI.
- *Diseases of Childhood*:
 - There was one case of measles and one case of mumps.
 - There were no reported cases of rubella and pertussis.
 - There were 168 cases of chickenpox notified to the unit, 5 of which occurred in non residents. There were also 15 clusters of chickenpox involving 34 reported Maltese persons.
 - There were 39 cases of herpes zoster reported.
 - There were 100 sporadic cases of Scarlet fever and 8 clusters involving 16 people. Those affected were all residents in Malta.
- *Sexually Transmitted Infections*: There were 60 notified cases of Chlamydia, two of which involved persons of foreign nationality. There were 63 cases of Gonorrhoea. There were 13 cases of latent syphilis amongst whom two were non-residents. There was one case of primary syphilis and 5 cases secondary syphilis.

Influenza A (H1N1) v Pandemic 2009

The unit had the responsibility for surveillance and monitoring of the Influenza Pandemic of 2009. Medical staff worked on a roster of on-call duties to address the pressing requests for testing and management of influenza cases. A database of all tested individuals was organised and actively used.

Another database was prepared for the vaccination campaign of Swine flu in 2010. A helpline for the general public was set up as well as another helpline for General Practitioners.

By the end of the first pandemic wave of the illness (end of September), 316 cases of H1N1 disease were confirmed. The peak of the first wave was in week 32. The peak of the second wave of the infection occurred in week 52.

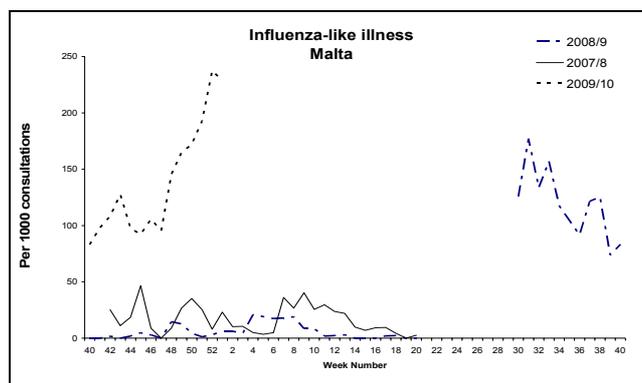
2,263 were tested for H1N1 (non-sentinel) and 697 cases tested positive until the end of the year for the Pandemic Influenza of 2009.

The first case of H1N1 influenza occurred on 1 July 2009. The containment phase lasted eight days (1-8 July) whereas the mitigation phase was held from 9 July to 20 December. The country moved into the treatment phase on 21 December after a second peak of the influenza was registered. The vaccination campaign was started on 29 December 2009.

Upon the start of the pandemic, an intensive general public campaign was launched to advise on the H1N1 pandemic, how it is spread and measures for the prevention of spread. During December, a campaign was launched to encourage uptake of H1N1 vaccine including TV/Radio promos, print adverts and various interviews on the media to tackle common issues related to vaccination.

Sentinel Surveillance

For the Influenza season of 2008-2009, nine private GPs participated in sentinel surveillance of influenza, pneumonia, acute respiratory tract infection, acute otitis media and acute bronchitis. Active sentinel surveillance is ongoing for the 2009-2010 Influenza season, by the participation of eight GPs.



Sentinel Influenza Surveillance since 2008

Travel Medical Advice

The Unit provided information to the general public requesting medical advice prior to travelling abroad.

Website

The Infectious Disease Prevention and Control Unit maintained its website by posting monthly reports and also posting information of communicable diseases and any related press releases or updates, as required including regular updates on Influenzas H1N1 and related press releases.

Academic

- Talks to the general public on Food Safety and Food Hygiene.
- Lectures to undergraduates and post graduate students.
- A series of CPD lectures on Infectious Diseases to Public Health doctors.
- Talks on radio and TV on communicable diseases.

- One permanent member of staff graduated in MSc Public Health and two members of the permanent staff obtained their accreditation as Public Health specialists.
- The unit hosted trainees as part of their training programme for specialisation in Public Health.

Conferences, Seminars, Courses and Meetings

Departmental officials attended various conferences, seminars, courses, meetings and workshops both locally and abroad. In all they attended one course abroad on training on outbreak response, and a number of meetings abroad which included Health Security meetings and Advisory Forum, Competent body meetings on preparedness, response, surveillance and threats and network meetings on influenza, sexually transmitted diseases and TB and Climate change organised by the European Communicable Disease Centre (ECDC) in Sweden.

The unit was a co-organiser of the well attended Second Food and Water Borne Zoonoses Network meeting of ECDC in Malta on 24-25 September.

Other Work in 2009

- Amending case definitions;
- Participation in international regulation committee, Intersectoral pandemic committee, National Antibiotic committee;
- Chairing of the Advisory committee on Immunisation Practices;
- Providing data to various networks including ESSTI, EWGLI, EUVACNET, TESSy and WHO and filling in numerous questionnaires to WHO, ECDC, EU Commission and international EU funded project related to infectious diseases;
- Preparing protocols and guidelines on the following:
 - Recommendations on Health related procedures required by third country nationals applying for a work permit locally
 - Policy for screening International University students for infectious disease
 - Establishment of procedures for reporting of microbiology laboratory results from Mater Dei
 - Pre-employment TB screening guidelines
 - Protocol for TB contact tracing
 - Guidelines for screening of Migrants
 - Licensing requirement for Body Piercing
 - Updating of protocols on a number of diseases such as food borne illnesses, measles, rubella HIV/AIDS, chlamydia, gonorrhoea and syphilis etc
 - Policy for Hepatitis B vaccination in health care workers
- Submission of an application for EU funds for setting up of an isolation unit within Detention Centres for irregular immigrants.

Other Functions of IDCU

The Unit was also involved in other duties falling under the Department for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention namely:

- vetting of working permits of foreigners from the health point of view;
- participation in the Second Food Safety Week held on 14 -21 November where a month-long billboard campaign was conducted, including radio programmes and TV interviews. A Food Safety website was also set up for the occasion while a calendar for 2010 was designed, printed and distributed;
- organisation of two visits to Malta by an expert team on Vector Borne Diseases from ECDC; a risk assessment of potential vector borne diseases in humans was done, principally for the following infections: West Nile Fever, Dengue, Chikungunya and Malaria. Assessment of human diseases (Cutaneous and Visceral Leishmaniasis) transmitted by sandflies was also performed.

Chest Unit

Introduction

The role of the Chest Unit is to coordinate activities on Tuberculosis (TB) prevention, surveillance and control. The main functions of the Chest Unit during 2009 were to run the Screening Programme for Irregular Migrants arriving in Malta, screening of third country nationals applying for work permits in Malta, screening of foreign students, prisoners and staff working in environments placing them at high risk for Tuberculosis infection. The Chest Unit also screened contacts of patients infected with Tuberculosis and provided BCG vaccine to those working in high risk areas or those travelling to high prevalence countries and organised Directly Observed Treatment for Tuberculosis patients. The Chest Unit also gave lectures to interested groups (particularly those working with irregular migrants) on Tuberculosis and reported data on Tuberculosis to the World Health Organisation and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control.

Besides the above routine activities, in 2009, the Chest Unit further strengthened the provision of Directly Observed Therapy for Tuberculosis in open centres for irregular migrants, and continued work on guidelines for pre-employment screening for Tuberculosis and screening of schoolchildren for Tuberculosis. A database was also created to collect information on screening of irregular immigrants electronically. Following the advice of the Advisory Committee on Immunisation Policy, procedures for vaccinating children born to parents hailing from high risk countries were strengthened in collaboration with the Paediatric department at Mater Dei Hospital.

Surveillance for Tuberculosis

There were 49 cases of Tuberculosis notified during 2009. This is a slight decrease over the previous year and reflects the decrease in arrivals in irregular immigrants during 2009.

The cases of Tuberculosis were as follows:

- 10 pulmonary TB cases in Maltese nationals
- 22 pulmonary TB cases in foreign nationals (20 asylum seekers)
- five extra pulmonary TB cases in Maltese nationals
- 12 extra pulmonary TB cases in foreign nationals (12 asylum seekers)

As in previous years, the majority of TB cases were among foreigners (69%), and among these irregular migrants were the predominant group (65% of all cases). This reflects the growing community of persons in Malta coming from high incidence countries. The number of cases among persons born in Malta remained stable. These numbers are provisional and could change following the receipt of further laboratory data.

Contact Tracing

The number of persons screened as contacts of notified TB cases decreased in 2009. The following table summarises the examination of contacts of notified TB cases:

Outcome	Contacts
Active TB and Treated	0
Referred to Chest Clinic	13
Followed up/Discharged	37
Total	50

Screening Programme for Irregular Migrants

There was a decrease in the number of arrivals of irregular migrants reaching Malta during 2009. During the year, a total of 5,227 irregular migrants were screened (some more than once). Of these, 199 had an

abnormal screening and were referred to the Chest Clinic for assessment. The screening programme identified 16 cases of Active Tuberculosis, who were then notified in 2009. The following table shows a breakdown of the screening programme in 2009.

Type of screening	Persons screened	Outcome
Screening Programme for Irregular Immigrants (landing) ⁽¹⁾	1,475	57 abnormal CXR; all referred to Chest Clinic; 6 cases notified active TB; 15 started on preventive treatment
Screening Programme for Irregular Immigrants (release) ⁽²⁾	2,268	5 abnormal CXR; all referred to Chest Clinic; 1 case notified active TB
Screening Programme for Irregular Immigrants (Minors and Pregnant women) ⁽³⁾	95 Minors	14 had high Mantoux and were referred to Chest Clinic.
	47 Pregnant	15 had high Mantoux; all pregnant women are referred to Chest Clinic.

⁽¹⁾ Irregular immigrants screened for TB on arrival in Malta in 2009.

⁽²⁾ Screening of Irregular immigrants prior to release from detention centres. This data refers to immigrants released in 2009.

⁽³⁾ Minors and pregnant women are additionally screened through Mantoux tests for evidence of latent TB.

Screening of Employees working in High Risk Environments

Although there is no routine recall system for screening of employees working in high risk areas, persons working with irregular migrants are encouraged to attend for annual screening for Tuberculosis. This included Detention Service, AFM, Police, Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS), Refugee Commission and Appogg personnel. The objective is to test for tuberculin conversion or high tuberculin reactors and to offer them preventive treatment if required. In 2009, out of 273 persons screened, 27 were referred to Chest Clinic for assessment. There were no cases of active pulmonary disease among these personnel. The following table summarises the screening of employees working in high risk environments:

Department	Tested	High Mantoux	Given BCG	Abnormal CXR	Referred Chest Clinic
AFM/Detention Service	203	23	3	0	23
Police	26	1	1	0	1
Other agencies	44	3	1	0	3
Total	237	27	5	0	27

Work Permits

During the year, 1,753 foreigners were screened for TB during the work permit application process. Of these, 11 had abnormal Chest X-rays and were referred to the Chest Clinic for follow-up. None were diagnosed as active TB. Two were found to be suffering from chronic Hepatitis B.

Prison

Prison inmates are screened for TB once they are detained at CCF. There were 36 foreigners who were screened during 2009 – none of these had abnormal results. Of the 4 Maltese inmates screened, none had abnormal Chest X-rays.

Others

Foreign students are referred to the Chest Unit for screening for Tuberculosis prior to entering a government school in Malta. Of the 166 persons screened, three had abnormal Chest X-rays or a positive Tuberculin skin test and were referred to Children's Outpatients for assessment.

Thirty-three persons employed with Dar Tal-Providenza were screened for TB in 2009.

Tuberculin Testing and BCG Vaccination

The Chest Unit administered a total of 186 BCG vaccinations in 2009. These were mainly vaccinations of children born to irregular immigrants and foreigners residing in Malta.

The Unit also performed a total of 567 Tuberculin skin tests. These were as follows:

- 273 as part of screening of employees at high risk;
- 110 as screening of irregular immigrants (including minors and prior to giving BCG to children of irregular immigrants);
- 31 as part of testing of persons who stayed in high risk countries for >4 weeks;
- 50 as part of screening of contacts of cases of active Tuberculosis;
- 72 classified as miscellaneous.

Referrals from School Medical Services

Eight school children were referred by the School Medical Services due to a high reaction to tuberculin testing and were referred to Children's outpatient for further follow-up and possible treatment. One was notified as active Tuberculosis.

Other Activities

Presentations regarding tuberculosis were given to people working with asylum seekers in Malta. This included Agenzija Appogg, and AFM personnel. The presentations consisted of an overview of TB including transmission, screening activities, treatment, DOT and drug resistance.

World TB day

A campaign was launched on World Tuberculosis Day, on 24 March, to increase awareness of the disease and how it is transmitted, and to make the general public aware of the control measures that are being instituted to control this disease.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH CARE SERVICES STANDARDS

OVERALL PURPOSE

The principal purpose for the Department for Health Care Services Standards is to achieve improvement in the quality of care and ensure patient safety through regulation. Patient safety is of paramount priority as there cannot be quality of care without patient safety and this principle remains foremost when planning all the Department's activities.

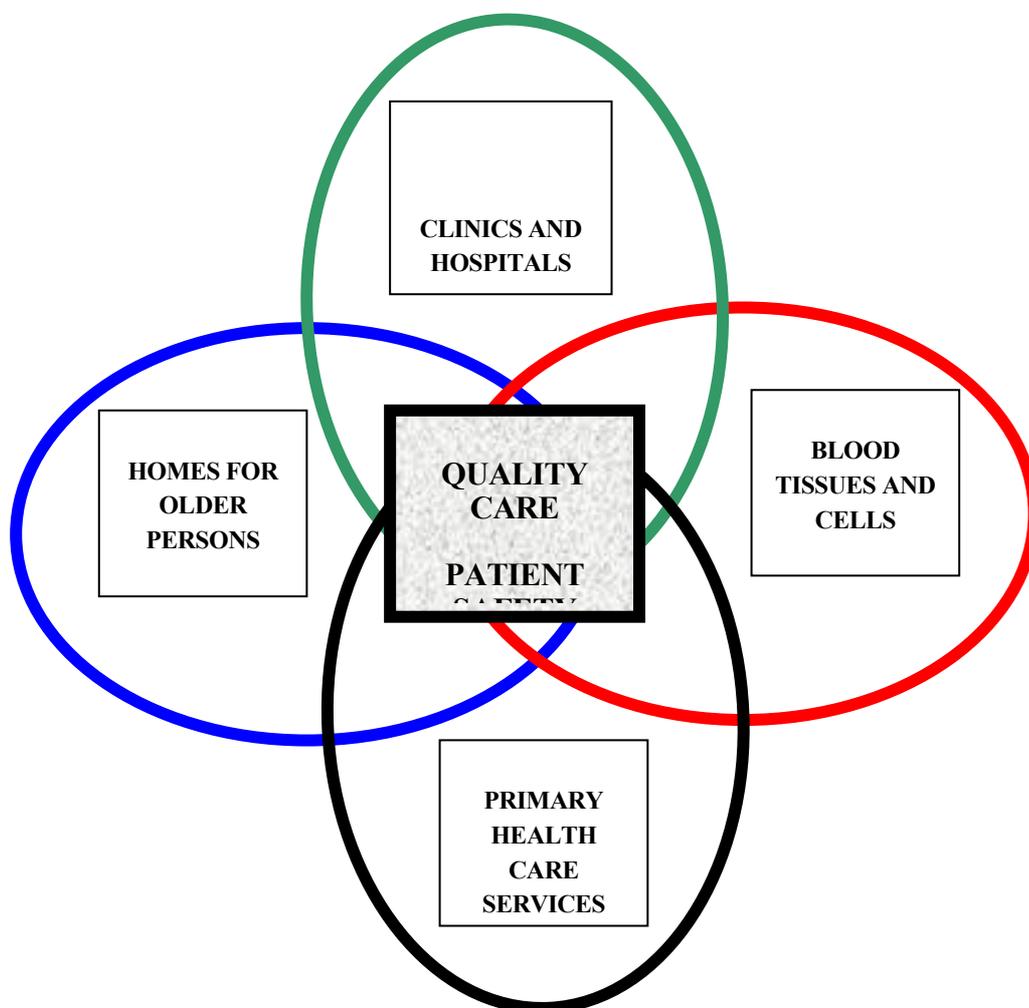
REMIT

The remit of the Department's regulatory jurisdiction can be classified into the following four main sectors where health care services are delivered:

- Clinics and hospitals including public hospitals;
- Homes for older persons including government homes;
- Primary health care including all service providers in this sector – public and private and also mental health services;
- Blood transfusion services – including the National Blood Establishment and blood banks (public and private), and services involving tissues and cells.

These four main health care services sectors regulated by DHCSS are represented in the following figure, with the overlapping central area representing quality of care improvement and guaranteeing patients safety as the main focus.

Consequent to the extensiveness of this territory to be regulated, DHCSS has submitted formal requests for a proportionate and proper investment in capacity building to enable this new Department to discharge its functions in a proper and timely manner.



STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT AREAS

The most important achievements during 2009 can be categorised in the following four main strategic developmental areas:

Consolidation of the Core Regulatory Functions

There are 10 private clinics, and their scheduled inspections have continued during 2009 to ensure that standards of care are being upheld. For each private clinic, the yearly licence was issued by the Minister for Social Policy, after DHCSS had presented the inspection report for each of these entities, with specific recommendations for the amelioration of service provision.

During 2009, the external professional services of a retired anaesthetist were also engaged subsequent to a public tender for expression of interest, to augment DHCSS's Inspectorate Team. His services were

engaged to continue work on the Guidelines for the Terms of Obsolescence of Anaesthetic machines in use in clinics and hospitals. The discussions in the formulation of the guidelines also included a panel of experts chaired by the President of the Malta College of Anaesthetists and in consultation with the Chairperson of Anaesthesia. The agreement was reached on the first draft copy of these guidelines related to patient safety and it is planned that consultation will be widened to include licensees of private clinics during 2010. This model of participatory regulation is achieving the intended outcomes and it is hoped that this structured approach will be used in other sectors to be regulated.

There are 29 church and private homes for older persons operating in Malta and Gozo, and their scheduled inspections continued during 2009, to ensure that standards of care were being upheld. For each home, the yearly licence was issued by the Minister for Social Policy, after DHCSS had presented the inspection report for each of these homes, with specific recommendations for the amelioration of service provision. Compared to the previous year, there was a small contraction of 0.7% decrease in the number of licensed beds and church homes. The latter homes had an overall occupancy rate of 92%. Comparatively there was an 8.3 % increase in the number of licensed beds in the private homes including the licensing of one private long term care facility with an overall occupancy rate of 88%.

Homes for Older Persons	Number of Homes	Number of Beds
Church Homes	17	733
Private Homes	12	993
Total	29	1,726

Collaboration in the Leonardo European programme involving mobility of professionals to increase staff competences in the regulation of health care services continued during 2009. DHCSS persisted in networking with the project lead, namely the *Centre Hospitalier Intercommunal du Pays des Hautes Falaises de Fecamp*, Normandy France, with a view to send local personnel to gain experience in two identified areas: (a) training opportunities for assessors in the use of the EVA (External Evaluation) - the EVA method refers to a holistic method of inspecting homes for older persons developed by the *Comte Européen pour le Développement de l'Intégration Sociale*, and (b) sharing experiences in the monitoring of standards of care in Mental Health institutes with specific reference to the use of physical restraint and covert medication.

During 2009, work continued in close collaboration with the Department for Nursing Services Standards and Director General for Public Health Regulation on the standards for long term care for older persons with the ultimate aim to enshrine them in a legal framework. The National Standards to Open a New Home for Older Persons, which will mainly focus on the physical aspects of the health care service provision, will be part of the above referred to standards.

During this year, the unit continued to engage in ongoing research such as action research studies on special themes for each year's inspections. During 2009, the special theme involved the preparation and subsequent issuing of nutritional guidelines to Homes for older persons.

Also during 2009, work continued on the very pertinent theme of Fire Safety in Homes for Older Persons by encouraging all homes to be compliant with safety and preparedness issues. It was reiterated that for licensing purposes, all homes need to be equipped with an emergency evacuation plan to ensure safety of vulnerable residents in such cases of emergencies.

During 2009, DHCSS continued collaborating with the Directorate of Nursing Services Standards and the Environmental Health Department to augment its Inspection Team, visiting the homes for older persons and private clinics/hospitals for licensing purposes. This inter-directorate synergy is a step towards more horizontal collaboration and adds the necessary inter-disciplinary value to the inspection process.

As in previous years, a circular was sent to all the homes soliciting them to encourage their elderly residents to take the seasonal influenza. In a new initiative, during the 2009 home inspections, the influenza seasonal vaccine uptake was investigated and was found to range from 71% in a particular home to 100% in 19

homes. The average influenza vaccine uptake in the homes for older persons being 95%, a positive response to DHCSS solicitation and advice in preventive care proffered to this vulnerable cohort of the population.

DHCSS continued to proffer its recommendations to MEPA's Consultation process, especially with regards to the proposals of building new homes for older persons and increase the availability of more community beds. During 2009 a total of 10 MEPA consultations were processed.

Also DHCSS, in collaboration with the Parliamentary Secretary for the Elderly, continued to participate in the pre-consultation discussions with private entrepreneurs interested in submitting proposals to build new homes for older persons and private clinics/hospitals. 18 pre-MEPA consultations/meetings were held with a prospective potential realisation of a total of 435 new beds for older persons amounting to an approximate 44% increment in the present availability of beds in the private sector.

Collaboration with the Director for Elderly Care also continued as part of the screening process in the Private Public Partnership (PPP) scheme. DHCSS screens and actively engages in a propitious process to ameliorate the conditions of care in the homes from which Government considers buying beds for older persons under the PPP scheme.

As part of DHCSS's responsibility to facilitate communication and ensure ongoing consultation with all stakeholders especially external ones, the Department remains in active discussions with the umbrella organisation of non-government organisations, namely the Malta Health Network. DHCSS has been building on previous consultation initiatives such as the healthy links which already exist with *Kunsill Nazzjonali Anzjani* to be receptive to these well-articulated expectations of all healthcare service users. Also during 2009, very useful links continued to be built with the Maltese Association of Psychiatric Nurses.

DHCSS continued to be actively engaged in the focus groups set up for feedback and consultation for the improvement of the Primary Health Care sector and Community Care. DHCSS has the remit to license these services and furthermore ensure a seamless transition of the service user's pathway from Community/Primary Health Care to Institutional/Hospital Care.

The Department continued to investigate and act on service users' complaints. There were 13 investigations during 2009. DHCSS' intention is not to substitute or replicate the customer care services that each entity needs to have in place as part of good governance. These filtered reports necessitate to be subject to a structured analysis which takes into account the wider factors within the organisation which may have given rise to the complaint. This is 'root cause analysis' – a term borrowed from the world of engineering and this process allows all of the factors which might have contributed to an event to be identified and analysed. Investment in human resource capacity build-up will enable DHCSS to continue to discharge this function and all the other obligations in a timely and appropriate manner.

DHCSS continues to be actively engaged in the Medical Devices Alert cascade. It is subsequent to the close collaborative networking between DHCSS, the Director of Procurement and the Malta Standards Authority, that we could contribute jointly to this 'engineered safety devices' structured approach as per EU Directives. During 2009, the two main private hospitals continued to be included in the alert cascade.

Expansion on the Existing Core Functions into areas of Health Care not yet regulated

There are to date eight government homes for older persons in Malta, and in close collaboration with the Director for Elderly Care, these homes were inspected during 2009 with the intention to renew the licence and to ensure that standards of care were being upheld. For each home, the licence to be renewed on a yearly basis was issued by the Minister for Social Policy, after DHCSS presented the inspection report for each, with specific recommendations for the amelioration of service provision.

Homes for Older Persons	Number of Homes	Number of Beds
Government Homes	8	782
Government Long-term Care facilities including St Vincent de Paule Residence	4	1,685
Total	12	2,467

In accordance with the departmental remit to include within its regulated remit all the residential care services for older persons, the long-term facilities of JAntide Ward in Mount Carmel Hospital, St Anna's residence and the Male Geriatric Ward at Gozo General Hospital were also inspected during 2009, with the intention of licensing, to ensure that standards of care were being upheld.

As planned, following discussions with the management of St Vincent de Paule (SVPR) and the launch of an innovative method of using a pre-inspection self-assessment questionnaire circulated in all the wards and sections of SVPR, for the first time St Vincent de Paule Residence was also inspected by DHCSS inspectorate in 2009. A licence, together with a report with recommendations, was subsequently issued.

With a total of 2,467 beds for older persons, the Government has the majority with 60% of the caring beds, followed by the private sector with 23% and church-run homes occupying the remaining 17%. Furthermore, analysing and comparing the occupancy rate for 2009 between private, church and government homes for older persons, including long-term care facilities, the highest overall occupancy rate of 96% goes also to government-run entities. From a reflective practitioner perspective, analysing the market and the evolving trends is an integral part of understanding the sector that DHCSS regulates.

In close collaboration with the Department for Nursing Services Standards, DHCSS continued the initiative to draft a set of standards to license nursing services agencies.

DHCSS continued to invest in close collaborative links with the geriatricians, and discussions continued to take place during 2009, to address the sensitive issue of dementia care and how standards will need to be applied, keeping in mind the demographic shift in our population and the ever increasing cohort of the group of older persons requiring extra attention by carers. Also in 2009, prior to circulating to all the homes for older persons, the guidelines to mitigate the ill effects of extremes of weather conditions, consultations were also held with the Maltese Geriatric Society.

Work within the specially set-up Committee, to collate a set of standards to be used for licensing Mental Health Services, continued during 2009.

The list of licensed homes and clinics/hospitals was made available on the Department's website which is accessible at: <http://www.sahha.gov.mt> and in line with the Freedom of Information Act, a standard format for reporting the key inspection findings was piloted during 2009, in order to have a transparent and clear reporting vehicle. This format includes in a standard manner the demographic data pertinent for each home, and details as regards the inspection process.

As compared with the previous year, DHCSS registered a 61% increase in the number of licensed beds and overall from 2007, the year that the Department was set up, achieved a staggering increase in the number of licensed beds as can be seen from the following table:

Year	Number of Licensed Beds by DHCSS	Yearly Increase
2007	1,650	datum year
2008	2,612	58%
2009	4,193	61%

Development on the Existing Regulatory Competencies and Embarkment into New Regulatory Services

The principal purpose of DHCSS is to achieve improvement in Quality of Health Care and ensure Patient Safety through Regulation, however regulating for improvement does not preclude a proactive/preventive role in the discharge of this appointed remit.

During 2009, DHCSS embarked on a preventive programme to mitigate the ill effects of extreme weather temperatures, namely heat waves in summer and extreme cold in winter, on vulnerable residents in homes for older persons licensed by the Department.

Notwithstanding that the scope of this preventive programme is very focused, the paradigm shift subsequent to the departure from the retrospective regulatory role to a proactive one needs documentation. DHCSS assumed responsibility for the implementation of this new transformational regulatory model.

DHCSS, as a strategic centre for this initiative, played a critical role to provide superior value to the quality of care delivered to the residents of homes for older persons. From the management perspective, DHCSS successfully managed a web of partners to identify and link together essential caring processes to serve service users better. The evolutionary change from the maintenance mode of action into an improvement *modus operandi* demanded the following incremental steps:

- Literature research to collate and draft guidelines targeting managers and carers in nursing homes to take preventive action to increase resilience and mitigate the ill effects of summer heat waves and winter cold temperatures on vulnerable older persons.
- Widening consultations for consensus building including geriatricians and policy makers.
- Circulating both guidelines to prevent hyperthermia in summer and hypothermia in winter, in good time for homes to implement the recommendations and posting them on the departmental website at <http://www.sahha.gov.mt>.
- Liaising with the Parliamentary Secretariat for the Elderly to monitor by active scrutiny during the summer and winter months that the recommendations have actually been implemented.

Prevention of hyperthermia and hypothermia in older persons are aggressive goals demanding the shifting of strategic organisational frameworks and with this aim DHCSS forged a strong interface of networking with the Casualty Department of Mater Dei Hospital (MDH) with the start of the winter months in 2009. All elderly patients referred to MDH Casualty have, as part of their clinical assessment, their body temperature measured and recorded in a list that is subsequently sent on a daily basis to DHCSS for scrutiny and follow-up. When suspected cases of hypothermia of referred residents from licensed homes are detected, surprise inspections at various times of the day and night are coordinated to ensure that preventive action is taken in the identified home in time to prevent more such cases of hypothermia being referred to secondary care. With this network level strategy, DHCSS created a preventive regulatory vision in which all partners play a critical role.

Work and collaboration continues with the Director of Health Information and Research to ensure that the granularity and content of the data collection especially at Mater Dei as in the Hospital Activity Analysis, will enable effective monitoring and auditing by the development of clinical performance indicators.

One of the main purposes of this collaborative initiative is to increase the scope of the data being collected to meet national and international health care reporting obligations. Furthermore, the active participation of DHCSS is to ensure that such data could be transformed into information for quality monitoring as well as comparative analysis of key performance indicators.

This inter-departmental collaboration upholds relevant European initiatives such as the Minimum Hospital Data Set and Systems Health Accounts. It is envisaged that for outcomes that could be quantifiable, the Statistical Process Control (SPC) technique will be used to monitor and control the process of care. SPC will be used to ensure that the process meets specific standards by measuring its performance.

By the active participation in this inter-departmental initiative of having a standardised system for data collection to be able to uniformly code, validate and analyse clinical information, DHCSS has effectively taken the first step of many that will need to be implemented in the plan for the Accreditation/Licensing of Mater Dei Hospital.

Diversification into New Territory and Regulating Novel Sectors of Health Care Services.

This strategic developmental area of diversification for DHCSS is essential to satisfy EU legal obligations emergent from the transposition into Maltese legal framework of the EU Blood and Blood Components Directive as well as the Tissues and Cells Directive.

During 2009, DHCSS followed up the previous year's planned roadmap in collaboration with the Medicines Authority for the setting up of the necessary mechanisms and structures to inspect and license the National Blood Transfusion Services as a Blood Establishment according to the recommendations of the EU Directives. The licence was issued in September 2009. The DHCSS also continued to be one of the collaborative partners in the EUBIS (EU Blood Inspection Scheme) Project and in September 2009 was invited on behalf of the project partners to present the Guidelines for inspection of Blood Establishments for Competent Authorities at the 16th PIC/S (Pharmaceutical Inspection Collaboration Scheme) Experts' Meeting on Blood, Tissues and Cells in Copenhagen, Denmark.

Subsequent to the achievement of the aforementioned milestone, DHCSS developed a plan to build the appropriate mechanisms and structures to have the various blood banks assessed with an intention to regulate. Both private and public blood banks will be included in this regulatory framework.

During 2009, DHCSS finalised the reengineering of the haemovigilance system for the reporting and investigation of serious adverse events and reactions according to the specified EU Directives. The new National Haemovigilance system was launched at a seminar organised by the DHCSS on 27 April 2009 at Palazzo Castellania. The seminar saw the wide participation of all the stakeholders (both from the public and private sectors) for whom the reporting of adverse reactions and events related to blood transfusion is relevant. During 2009, the DHCSS continued networking with the European Haemovigilance Network through the membership in this network. The grant obtained from the latter during 2007 was instrumental to the finalisation of training in Haemovigilance in Dublin of a member of staff from MDH Blood Bank. The collection of reports on Adverse Reactions and Events related to blood transfusion by the Haemovigilance Unit within the DHCSS continued throughout 2009. There was a three-fold rise from the previous year in the number of reports received by the Haemovigilance Unit. The second Maltese National Haemovigilance Report with data pertaining to 2008 was submitted to the European Commission as stipulated by the EU Directives on Blood and Blood Components.

In addition, DHCSS moved into the phase of the implementation of the obligations imposed by the EU Directive on Tissues and Cells and their respective transposition in Maltese legislation. A system for the reporting of Adverse Reactions and Events related to Tissue/Cell Transplantation was developed, the reporting forms were uploaded to the Department's website, collection of data was made by the Tissue/Cell Vigilance Unit within DHCSS and the first report on Adverse Reactions and Events related to Tissue/Cell Transplantation pertaining to 2008, was submitted to the European Commission.

DHCSS was also instrumental in transposing Directive 2009/135/EC, allowing temporary derogations to certain eligibility criteria for whole blood and blood component donors as laid down in Annex III to Directive 2004/33/EC in the context of a risk of shortage caused by the Influenza A(H1N1) pandemic.

During 2009, DHCSS finalised the setting up of the mechanisms and structures to have the stem cell collection service providers assessed, with an intention to regulate and license according to national legislation.

During 2009, DHCSS continued with its networking with other European partners with the aim of sharing best practices and developing competencies and skills for the inspection, regulation and licensing of tissue and cell establishments in line with the EU Tissue and Cells Directives. This included participation in activities organised through the EUSTITE Project (EU Standards and Training for the Inspection of Tissue Establishments). DHCSS was invited to showcase the organisational model used by a small Member State in trying to achieve compliance with the Tissues and Cells EU Directive given the constrained expert resources inherent to its miniscule size - this opportunity came up during the EUSTITE Final Conference 1 - 4 December 2009 in Warsaw Poland.

Another novel area that DHCSS worked on during 2009 was that of the Quality and Safety of Organ Transplantation. DHCSS was very active in providing recommendations during the drafting phase of the EU Directive on the Quality and Safety of Organ Transplantation and is taking a proactive approach in setting up the appropriate regulatory mechanisms that will be necessary when the directive comes into force.

Service users' satisfaction is the key measurement of any service provision and during 2009, as in the previous year, the residents' perception of the quality of care in the homes for older persons was surveyed in a 577 residents' sample from all homes including private, church and government homes.

DHCSS also believes that a concern for the safety of patients must be both constant and proactive and has set this issue as a key target on the agenda of this new Department. During 2009 for the first time the Patient Safety Culture of homes for older persons was surveyed for benchmarking purposes. The Nursing Home Survey on Patient Safety, developed by the Agency for Health Care Research and Quality, was conducted using the face-to-face interview method with the participation of a total of 431 health care workers from all the licensed homes for older persons in Malta and Gozo. Nursing homes managed by the Church, Government, and private and public-private partnership homes were included in the study.

Knowledge Management

Knowledge management is an essential constituent of health intelligence which is of paramount importance to support evidence-based decision making. During 2009, the DHCSS, aware of the centrality of patient safety and quality of care in its very existential ethos,, engaged in three main research initiatives:

- Measuring and benchmarking the Culture of Patient Safety in homes for older persons. Together with the findings of a similar survey carried out on Patient Safety Culture in Mater Dei Hospital, these were presented during the 7th Maltese Medical School Conference in November 2009.
- Situational analysis of the measures being implemented in homes for older persons to mitigate the negative effects of the summer heat wave and during the cold weather months.
- Analysing the service users' perception of the quality of care in homes for older persons as part of a systematic effort to measure service users' experience as they navigate in all the various healthcare pathways.

Culture of Safety

Cognisant that local research is needed in this sector, DHCSS as a follow-up to the previous year's survey to measure and benchmark Patient Safety Culture in Mater Dei, during 2009 carried out the Nursing Home Survey on Patient Safety in Homes for Older Persons. The term 'culture of safety' refers specifically to the contextualisation of the concern for patients' safety which needs to be embedded at every level of the organisation. A culture of safety is one that seeks to analyse and thereby anticipate adverse events including errors and, in the light of that analysis, to organise systems and practices which, as far as possible, prevent them. Barriers or defences can be built into systems so as to help avert them, or to contain and mitigate their potential for harm.

The main aim of this study is the analysis of the safety related perceptions and attitudes of staff working in the Homes of Older Persons in Malta and Gozo. The purpose of the study is to gauge the patient safety culture in nursing homes, increase awareness about patient safety issues amongst staff and evaluate the impact of patient safety improvement initiatives. Moreover, the results obtained provide a baseline to track changes in patient safety over time.

The Nursing Home Survey on Patient Safety, developed by the Agency for Health care Research and Quality, was conducted by face to face interviews to a total of 431 health care workers from all the licensed homes for older persons in Malta and Gozo. All nursing homes were included in the study.

The dimensions explored include teamwork; staffing; compliance with procedures; training and skills; non-punitive response to mistakes; handoffs; feedback and communication about incidents; communication openness; supervisor expectations and actions promoting resident safety; overall perceptions of resident safety; management support for resident safety and organisational learning.

Overall, a positive attitude was reported towards patient safety with the major problem in all sectors being the lack of staff. 95%, 85%, 79% and 77% of the respective church, private, private-public and state health care workers reported that they would recommend the nursing home to their relatives or friends.

Measures to mitigate the ill effects of extreme weather conditions on homes for Older Persons

Older persons, children, and the ill are the most vulnerable persons during times of excessive heat. DHCSS felt the need of surveying community homes for the elderly with the intention of finding what heat wave measures are currently being implemented to mitigate the ill effects of high ambient temperature on the elderly residents. To accomplish this, the Department prepared a detailed questionnaire and the homes chosen for the survey were randomly selected and included state, private and church community homes for the Elderly. The survey was conducted over a period of one month, during the summer of 2008. The thirteen homes (13 out of a total of 42) were visited at random and with no prior notice.

Prior to the summer of 2009, after a literature search and contextualised on the previous year survey findings, a set of advisory guidelines by the Department for Health Care Services Standards were circulated in all the homes for older persons. The same survey of the previous year was replicated in order to establish what progress the same homes had made subsequent to the issuing of the advisory guidelines.

The results showed that the great majority of the homes for the elderly were using the guidelines to help them in their struggle against times of excessive heat. The findings of this study were also presented as a poster in the 7th Maltese Medical School Conference in November 2009.

Service Users' Experience

DHCSS continued to strengthen its working relationships with other entities involved in the wider health/social care deliverance including ZAK (*Żgħħażaġħ Azzjoni Kattolika*) and the Malta Health Network. This networking continued to increase as a result of the ongoing sharing of information and queries on standards of care. During 2009, collaboration with Customer Care at MDH and NGOs working within this sector, mainly Volserv (Voluntary Services), intensified in an inter-sectoral initiative to capture aspects of patient experiences during their stay at Mater Dei Hospital, with the aim of continuous improvement including clinical outcomes, patient safety, and patient satisfaction.

As in the previous year, service users from all the homes for older persons were interviewed using a specially designed Quality of Care Evaluation questionnaire with a representative sample of 577 residents. As part of the summer work opportunities for university students, three students conducted this survey for DHCSS. Whilst the Department is still analysing the results, it is gratifying to note that for the question whether residents are satisfied with the quality of care, the majority (93%) of residents in homes for older persons answered in the positive. Another fundamental principle is that the resident should have the right

for respect of privacy and property; and to be free from unnecessary intrusion. It is also positive to note that from the findings of this survey, whilst 62% of residents interviewed share a room, the majority of 89% feel that their privacy is fully respected at all times in the Home.

Whilst there is no place for complacency, these findings are encouraging. The yearly inspections coordinated by DHCSS and which form the backbone of the regulatory framework for this particular healthcare sector, are surely contributing in the achieving of such positive results.

The representative sample sizes and the inclusion in these cross sectional surveys of all government, private and church homes will surely provide a robust scientific platform for evidence based policy planning purposes, to ensure quality of care in this sector of healthcare.

DEPARTMENT FOR ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

The Department for Environmental Health promotes and safeguards the well-being and health of the public from adverse environmental effects.

This Department provides its services through the following three main sections:

- *Health Inspectorate Services*: the executive arm of the Department, provides services through the Administration Unit; Citations Unit; Licensing Unit; Complaints Unit; Regional Units; Port Health Services; Food Safety Unit; Environmental Health Unit (whose functions are now being carried out by the Environmental Health Risk Management Team); Burials Administration Unit; Drug Control Unit; Institutional Health Inspectorate Unit (whose functions were taken over by the regional offices as of March 2009); and the Food Safety Commission Secretariat.
- *Port Health Medical Services*: primarily has the duty of border control from infectious diseases.
- *Public Health Laboratory Service*: provides analytical and scientific support to the investigations performed by all the branches/units within the Department.
- *Environmental Health Policy Coordinator*: provides support.

HEALTH INSPECTORATE SERVICES

Administration Unit

The Unit coordinates all work between regional offices, units and branches, replies to parliamentary questions, issues relevant memos and correspondence, processes contraventions, performs prosecution on behalf of the Public Health Regulation Division and is also responsible for procurement/distribution of equipment to all staff. Regions/units/sections that fall under the responsibility of the Manager Health Inspector (MHI) are monitored, controlled and advised through this office, to provide consistency at work. During 2009, 59 replies to parliamentary questions were drafted and 132 memos were issued.

Citations Unit

The main duties of the Unit are to:

- register all citations;
- prepare contravention reports for endorsement by the Manager Health Inspector;
- prepare Court summons;
- serve as contact point with Police Principal Citations Office;
- register and keep record of undertakings issued in terms of the Food Safety Act;
- register and keep record of undertakings issued in terms of the Public Health Act;
- register and keep record of emergency prohibition orders; and
- register and keep record of public health emergencies.

During the year, the number of Health Sitings appointed totalled 25 (16 in Malta and 9 in Gozo). The total number of cases heard by the presiding Magistrate was 1,407 (cases may be heard more than once during the year), of which 164 were decided. The total number of new cases during 2009 was 78, while 29 magisterial on-site inquires were performed; a total number of 363 charges were issued.

Undertakings issued in terms of Article 39 of the Food Safety Act totalled 248. Emergency Control Orders (30) and Emergency Prohibition Orders (15) in terms of Art. 36 of the Food Safety Act amounted to 45.

Licensing

The Superintendent of Public Health through the Department for Environmental Health and the Department for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention licenses the following private clinics: Dental Clinics; Physiotherapy Clinics; X-Ray Clinics; Chiropody Clinics; Acupuncture clinics; Medical Diagnostic Laboratories; and Tattooists.

A total of 180 private clinics were inspected in 2009, in connection with renewal of licences for the same year. Certain clinics were inspected more than once.

Breakdown of licensed clinics in Malta and Gozo		
	Malta	Gozo
Dental Clinics	95	9
Physiotherapy Clinics	19	0
Medical Diagnostic Labs.	6	0
Tattooists*	26 (18)**	0
X-Ray Clinics	15	1
Chiropody Clinics	5	0
Acupuncture Clinics	3	1
Total	169	11
Grand Total	180	

* Only in this case, the licence is a personal license, i.e. the applicant must be the actual tattooist who will be working within the premises being licensed.

** The 26 tattooists work within 18 tattoo studios. More than one tattooist can work within the same studio.

Complaints Administration Unit

The total number of complaints as lodged with this unit was 7,277. Of these, 6,209 were on environmental matters and 1,068 were food related.

Regional Units

Environmental Health Officers have been deployed to work within six regional units around Malta and one in Gozo. The Health Inspectorate functions within a Quality Service Charter with respect to the service offered to the public. The services offered by the Health Inspectorate Services included:

Inspections in connection with licensing	735
Undertakings (re Article 39 of the Food Safety Act of 2002)	222
Inspections for Risk Assessment grading purposes	4,647
Inspections of food premises (other than Risk Assessment)	4,083
Samples taken during inspections of food premises	183
Samples taken in connection with environmental issues	1,870
Samples taken in connection with sampling programs	1,109
Samples taken in connection with food poisonings	211
Nuisance reports/Abatement notices	675
Inspections re-food poisoning	72
Inspections to verify immunisation of children	0
Complaints - Food related	1,068
Complaints - Environment related	6,209

Port Health Services

Activities of Port Health Office, Health Inspectorate Services, Floriana

Inspections of marine crafts requested by Malta Maritime Authority	20
Inspection of refrigerated vehicles requested by Commissioner of Police	90
Repatriation of human remains	79
Burial at sea	0
Processing of requests in respect of import declaration of foodstuffs	15,240
Processing of requests for importation of pharmaceuticals and allied products	5,339
Ship Sanitation Control Certificate	231
Ship Sanitation Exemption Control Certificate	91
Extension of Ship Sanitation Certificates	17
Number of Inspections of Catering Establishments and Warehouses	288
Samples taken of imported items of food	177
Health/Radiation free Certificates issued	577
Undertakings	28
Inspections of incoming consignments	621
Destruction Certificates for unfit food	9
Registration of trader's application	63

The Port Health Medical Services were offered from the Floriana Port Health Office and Malta International Airport Health Clinic (Gudja) and the Yacht Marina Health Guard premises.

Activities of Port Medical Services

Number of ships granted pratique	11,220
Number of International yachts at marinas	36
Ship conveyances outside harbour requiring port health clearance	2,734
Ship bunkering services requiring port health clearance	1,852
Number of crew disembarked for health/injury reasons	34
Radio Medical advice referred to ships	35
Examination of corpses on board	3
Examination in stowaways	0
Examination of corpses recovered from sea	0
Examination of irregular immigrants	656
Irregular immigrants referred to Hospital on arrival	10

The Airport clinic was responsible for the implementation of the International Health Regulations, foremost the prevention of priority communicable diseases of being imported into Malta.

Sick/injured travellers	1,723
Sick/injured employees	3,623

Food Safety Unit

This Unit was responsible for:

- giving consultations prior to licensing food businesses or refurbishing already licensed food businesses;
- inspection of food premises prior to licensing (51);
- issuing approvals connected with: Trade Licences (304); MEPA (213) and Malta Tourism Authority (90) applications; Police Department temporary licences (2); Health Department licences (22); Customs Department (1);
- total number of applications for 2009 (633);
- total number of inspections performed during 2009 (937).

Environmental Health Unit

(Functions previously carried out by this unit in 2009 are being carried out by the Environmental Health Risk Management Team.)

The main functions of this Unit included:

- investigation of complaints originating from noise pollution, air pollution and mobile phones' antennae;
- coordination of programmes for the monitoring, assessing and controlling environmental parameters which pose a threat to human health;
- production of reliable and standardised information for those concerned with further development of various country policies, which may affect public health;
- acting as a contact point with the EU Directorate and MEPA regarding environmental health issues;
- registering of 24 Private Water Suppliers for 26 sources as per LN 357 of 2004;
- taking of 3,134 bathing water samples in collaboration with the Regional Health Officers and the Public Health Laboratory (87 official bathing sites were monitored);
- issuing one health warnings in respect of bathing water sites (7 site days closed);
- registering of 304 swimming pools in accordance with LN 129 of 2005;
- registering of 13 premises with respect to Cooling Towers as per LN 6 of 2006;
- issuing of 35 abatement notices under the Public Health Act;
- investigation of 7 cases of Legionella disease (made up of one cluster and five isolated cases).

The Pest Control Section deployed two teams of operatives in Malta. 159,900 point baits and 11,900 sewers were baited. One team is available in Gozo. 29,964 point baits and 2,711 sewer baits were baited.

Burials Administration Unit

The Burials Administration Unit was responsible for the running of Addolorata, Żebbuġ, Mosta, Burmarrad, Rabat, Mellieħa and Ta' Braxia Cemeteries. Burials carried out at government cemeteries were: 1,566 in Addolorata and 326 in other government cemeteries.

The number of new applications received for new gravesites during 2009 was 265. Also, 37 new applications for the transfer of graves by donation or inheritance were received.

Total number of cleaning of graves and transportation of remains during 2009 were:

	<i>Cleanings</i>	<i>Transportation</i>
Addolorata	421	78
Other government cemeteries	32	41

The Gozo region is responsible for the administration and management of the government cemeteries in Gozo (St Mary's Cemetery in Xewkija and Tal-Għonq Cemetery in Victoria). The number of burials effected in these cemeteries during 2009 was 82 (61 inside private graves and 21 in state-owned graves). 13 transfers of remains were effected whilst 37 cleaning of graves were carried out.

Drug Control Unit

This section was responsible for the issuing of Control Cards for narcotic and psychotropic drugs as per Drugs (Control) Regulations 1985 and Dangerous Drugs (Internal Control) Rules 1939. A total of 23,681 Control Cards were issued during 2009, of which 707 were issued in view of affidavits as the original cards were lost.

Institutional Health Inspectorate Unit

(covers January-February – functions taken over by the regional offices in February)

The aim of the Unit is to work with that part of the community which at some point in time is institutionalised or is frequenting some form of institution, possibly immuno-compromised, hence requires specific hygienic standards. These measures were taken:

- 38 inspections in government hospitals;
- 80 food swab/samples;

- 56 service/other water samples taken for analysis;
- 104 risk assessment inspections performed in various institutions.

Food Safety Commission Secretariat (FSCS)

- During 2009, the Food Safety Commission (FSC) met 18 times.
- There were 9,570 food businesses on the official food premises register, of which 949 were registered during 2009.
- The number of food handlers registered and issued with the required document during 2009 was 7,126.
- The present number of active registered food handlers is 25,752.
- The total number of food handlers cards issued so far, including renewals, is 55,340.
- During 2009, six new Food Hygiene Course Providers (FHCP) were authorised by the unit. Presently there are 52 FHCPs individuals or organisations approved to provide food hygiene courses.
- Registered cheeselets producers still stands at 1,300, as no new registrations were received in 2009.
- The FSCS is entrusted with the daily checking of all notifications received by e-mail from the EU Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed network. During 2009, 1,796 market notifications, tables and other communication were vetted, including 1,484 border rejections and 42 new notifications.
- There were 11 Alerts originating from Malta during 2009.
- A list of food items which were destroyed during 2009, and for which charges were issued by the Health Inspectorate, is summarised in the following tables:

Type of Food	Weight (Kgs)
Meat & Meat Products (incl. Poultry and Rabbits)	1,510.75
Fish & Fish Products	38
Dairy Products	1,479.183
Confectionery & bakery Goods	404.825
Savouries & Sweets	80.072
Juices & Beverages	726.84
Additives and additional ingredients	150
Sauces	318
Grocery	2,213.62
Baby Food	111.8
Contact Materials	32.7
Cooked Foods	2.3
Total	7,068.09
Bottled Water	10.000 ltrs

Breakdown of the Number of Charges Issued during 2009	
Food Hygiene Regulations of 2002	163
Code of Police Laws	71
Food Safety Act of 2002	39
Labelling, Presentation and Advertising of Foodstuffs (Amendment) Regulations	13
Registration of Food Premises Regulations	6
Registration of Food Handlers Regulations	34
Dairy Farms Regulations	1
Food Safety (Temperature Control) Regulations 2008	10
Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 of the European Parliament and the Council of 29 April 2004 laying down specific hygiene rules for food of animal origin.	1
Enforcement of various European Union Regulations on Food Safety, Regulations, 2008	3
Construction of Houses and Drains Regulations	3
Tobacco Control Act	8
Trading Regulations, 2004	2
Medical and Kindred Professions Ordinance	2
Control of Legionella Regulations, 2006	1
Honey Regulations, 2004	2
Management of Bathing Water Regulations 2008	1
Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 January 2002 laying down the general principles and requirements of food law, establishing the European Food Safety Authority and laying down procedures in matters of food safety	3
Total	363

PUBLIC HEALTH LABORATORY

The Public Health Laboratory (MPHL) continued to provide the vital analytical backup service for the whole department. MPHL was granted ISO accreditation for the first time for nine microbiological tests on 1 February 2008.

The Microbiology Section of the Public Health Laboratory was nominated National Reference Laboratory (food and products intended for animal feed) for: Salmonella (SLM-NRL); Campylobacter (CMP-NRL); Listeria (LM-NRL); Coagulase Positive Staphylococci (CPS-NRL); Verotoxigenic *E. coli* (VTEC-NRL); Parasites (PR-NRL); Antimicrobial Susceptibility Testing (AMS-NRL) while the Chemistry Section of the Public Health Laboratory served as the National Reference Laboratory (food and products intended for animal feed) for: Dioxins/PCBs; PAHs; Pesticides in Cereal; Pesticides in Food of Animal Origin and Food of High Fat Content; Pesticides – Single Residue Methods; Pesticides in Fruit and Vegetables; Mycotoxins; Heavy Metals; Food Contact Material; and Genetic Modified Organisms.

This laboratory examined a total number of 6,864 samples during 2009. The following list summarises the samples submitted from different sources as well as the samples analysed in the different sections of the Laboratory:

Food for Chemical Analysis	574
Water for Chemical Analysis	1,227
Food for Microbiological Analysis *	1,397
Samples (Environmental Swabs) for Hygienic Standard	274
Water for Microbiological Analysis	3,166
Clinical samples for Microbiological Analysis	103
Culture testing	123
Total	6,864

* A large number of food samples tested in 2009 consisted of five sub-samples (N=5).

Environmental Health Policy Coordination Unit

An Environmental Health Team, which is currently made up of two Public Health medicine specialists and a Senior Environmental Health Officer, works closely with the Director, Environmental Health, other departments and sectors, with the main aim of promoting the inclusion of environmental health in all relevant policies and in coordinating the formulation of evidence-based environmental health policy. The team has commenced work on various projects including the coordination of an Environmental Health Performance Review and a stakeholder workshop, which was carried out in March 2009 by a visiting team from the World Health Organisation Regional Office for Europe. A national conference was followed by a joint publication on the Health Effects of Climate Change in the Maltese Islands, again in collaboration with WHO-EURO. Projects planned for 2010 include national indoor radon monitoring and human bio-monitoring projects.

Publication of National Environmental Health Action Plan

The *National Environment and Health Action Plan (NEHAP) - A review and summary of actions* was finalised and published online in 2009. This document looks at the progress made on the implementation of actions relating to the four Regional Priority Goals of the Children's Environment and Health Action Plan for Europe (CEHAPE). These actions, covering the period 2006-2010, were agreed to by the various government sectors represented in an inter-ministerial committee that had been set up for this purpose.

The document may be accessed online at https://ehealth.gov.mt/HealthPortal/public_health/environmental-health/policy_coord_unit/seminars_publications.aspx.

Environmental Health Management Meetings

During 2009, the Directorate for Environmental Health (DEH) held regular monthly meetings with the Environment Protection Directorate of the Malta Environment and Planning Authority (MEPA). These meetings continue to serve to consolidate inter-sectoral action on environmental health issues such as air and water quality, noise, radiation and other matters, and to consolidate collaboration between the directorates. The Environment and Health national focal points are high-level personnel from MEPA and DEH, respectively for the World Health Organisation European Environment and Health process. Both focal points have been actively involved in coordinating preparatory work and documentation for the Fifth Inter-Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health to be held in Parma, Italy in March 2010.

Clean Air Consultative Group

During 2009, the Clean Air Consultative Group met on an ad hoc basis to discuss matters arising. The working group had submitted proposals for a legal notice which will require the setting up of an Air Quality Advisory Board under Public Health Act, to replace the Clean Air Act, which is to be repealed. This unit submitted recommendations to the short-term and medium-term measures proposed in the Air Quality Plan which will be submitted by Malta, supporting the request for a time extension to meet the required PM₁₀ levels.

Preparations for the WHO Fifth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health in 2010

A representative from the DEH attended the third inter-governmental high-level preparatory meeting in Bonn in April 2009, following previous meetings in Milan and Madrid in 2008. During these meetings, Member States discussed country implementation of Children's Environment and Health Action Plan for Europe (CEHAPE) Regional Priority Goals I to IV, dealing with health effects related to water and sanitation, air quality, accidents and injuries and supportive environments and physical agents, as well as the policy direction for the Fifth ministerial conference and beyond, which will include issues around health effects of climate change and indoor air pollution. A Draft Declaration based on priorities for action and commitment by Member States will be presented to Member States in Bonn in January 2010 for their final

review and agreement on the final text to be submitted for adoption in Parma. The Drafting Group received input from discussions held at the three high-level preparatory meetings, several sessions of the WHO European Environment and Health Committee, and the Thematic Meeting in Luxembourg in January 2009, as well as at sub-regional meetings for countries of south-eastern Europe and the newly independent states.

European Environment & Health Action Plan 2004-2010

Malta, through coordination and representation by the Office of the Director, Environmental Health is committed to the European Environment and Health Action Plan for the period 2004-2010. The Action Plan is designed to give the EU the scientifically grounded information needed to help all 25 EU Member States reduce the adverse health impacts of certain environmental factors and to endorse better cooperation between actors in the environment, health and research fields. It takes the concerns of the other institutions into account in the identification of the actions proposed and is designed to fit with existing actions at regional, national, European and international level, notably to the WHO pan-European Environment and Health process, and its commitments to ensuring safer environments for children. The three main themes of the Action Plan include: improving the information chain to understand the links between sources of pollution and health effects (actions 1-4); filling the knowledge gap by strengthening research; and addressing the emerging issues on environment and health (actions 5-8); and reviewing policies and improving communication (actions 9-13).

A representative from the Environmental Health Policy Coordination Unit attended the Consultative Meeting of Member States on Environment and Health held in early December 2009 in Brussels. The main purpose of the meeting was to update Member States representatives on the progress made in the implementation of the Environment Health Action Plan, discuss options for the follow-up of this plan after 2010, and finalise the progress report taking the comments from the Consultative Forum into account. This meeting was led by representatives from the European Commission DG Environment; DG Health and Consumers; DG Research; and the Joint Research Centre. Member States representatives put forward their recommendations and priorities for future areas of priority within the environmental health research field. Strong recommendations were made to fast-track research outcomes, especially FP-funded projects, to policy makers to minimise the existing gap between research results and policies. During this meeting contact was made with key individuals involved in COPHES (COnsortium to Perform Human bio-monitoring on a European Scale) relevant to technical support required with regard to Malta's interest in implementing a HBM project in the near future.

Climate Change Health Effects

The first National Seminar on the Health Effects of Climate Change - Raising Awareness and Building Capacity, was organised by the Department for Environmental Health in collaboration with WHO Regional Office for Europe, through the WHO Biennial Collaborative Agreement (2008-2009) for Europe. The seminar, which was well attended by some 100 participants from various interested sectors including NGOs, was addressed by various professionals who looked at the various possible effects of Climate change on human health within the Maltese Islands. Dr Bettina Menne (WHO-EURO) and the Maltese Ambassador for Climate Change and Chair of the UNFCCC Ad-hoc Working group on HE Michael Zammit Cutajar attended the seminar. The main aim of the seminar was to raise awareness amongst policy makers on climate change focusing on the associated health impacts, learn about what measures are currently being taken in response to these changes and what further action needs to be taken and to contribute towards building local capacity to deal with the effects of climate change.

Following the success of this seminar, the representative from this Unit was invited by WHO-EURO and the Cyprus Ministry of Health to address a similar National Workshop - *Building Capacities to cope with Health Impacts of Climate Change* held in early September 2009. Since Cyprus is an island state with similar climate related issues, this was an excellent opportunity for collaboration in this area.

The Environmental Health Policy Coordination Unit is presently working with several authors from different sectors on a publication to be issued in early 2010 on the Health Effects of Climate Change in the Maltese islands. This is being done under the WHO Biennial Collaborative Agreement 2008-2009 in collaboration with the WHO-EURO Global Change Office in Rome.

Transport, Health and the Environment

A representative from the Department of Environmental Health represented Malta at the Third High-level Meeting on Transport, Health and Environment in Amsterdam, Netherlands, on 22 and 23 January 2009, hosted by the Government of the Netherlands and organised by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Office for Europe in the framework of the Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (THE PEP), the Steering Committee of which Malta has been a Member for many years. The Amsterdam Declaration was the main policy outcome of this meeting. The Declaration commits Member States to wards adopting integrated policies towards the attainment of four European priority goals including (i) to contribute to sustainable economic development and stimulate job creation through investment in environment- and health-friendly transport, (ii) to manage sustainable mobility and promote a more efficient transport system, (iii) to reduce emissions of transport-related greenhouse gases, air pollutants and noise and (iv) to promote policies and actions conducive to healthy and safe modes of transport.

Reporting on Tobacco

The Environmental Health Policy Coordination Unit is responsible for holding a database according to Directive 2001/37/EC requiring manufactures and importers of tobacco products to submit a list of all ingredients and quantities thereof, used in manufacture of these tobacco products by brand name and type, specifying also the content of the list which must be accompanied by the toxicological data available to the manufacture and importer. A database of importers was set up and an introductory letter was sent to all recipients to conform to such directive. During 2009 data was received from 17 importers.

DEPARTMENT OF NURSING SERVICES STANDARDS (DNSS)

Introduction

The Department of Nursing Services Standards is responsible for the establishment and monitoring of nursing services' standards in all care sectors. The main purpose of the DNSS is to ensure the provision of good quality nursing services through regulation. Responsibilities falling under this office also include both the running and coordination of particular projects and initiatives, all requiring interdepartmental collaboration.

During 2009, DNSS progressed and nurtured ongoing developments, as well as embarked on new initiatives. This was done within the scope of the Department Nursing Services Standards, which is to provide vision and direction to nursing services as part of health service delivery in Malta. Such initiatives include the formulation of nursing standards, policies and guidelines, ensuring adequate nursing and midwifery manpower across all departments, the running of the Enrolled nurse – Staff nurse (EN-SN) conversion course, and intravenous therapy (IV) course, etc. Collaboration with other sectors such as the human resources contingency planning input to the Pandemic Contingency Plan and the execution thereof, the Institute of Health Care, the Council of Nurses and Midwives and the handing over of the running of the Continuous Professional Development scheme for nurses to the Resources and Support Division were also among the challenges taken up by this office. DNSS, through the engagement of MW Professional Ltd, was instrumental to continue with the momentum to develop the quality of mental health nursing service provision through the degree programmes in mental health nursing provided by the University of Malta.

Staff within DNSS have the responsibility to focus on specific areas or specialty in nursing and midwifery care and delivery. The methodological process of consultation through discussion and dialogue with colleagues in understanding the context of nursing and midwifery and the drafting of standards and policy is frequently used. Thus, these projects were sounded with staff and feedback sought from peers and experts, which dialogue is reflected in the various stages of work or projects carried out.

Formulation of Nursing Standards and Guidelines

National Standards for Homes for elderly people in Malta and Gozo

An Advisory Committee on *National Standards for Homes for elderly people* was officially appointed in February 2009 by the Director General, Public Health Regulation (DG PHR), consisting of a medical doctor specialised in geriatric medicine, nurses, physiotherapist, occupational therapist and social worker who work with elderly people, an Assistant Director working in the Elderly and Community Care Department and a nurse working in PHR. The main objective of the Advisory Committee is to assist in the formulation of documents related to standard setting in homes for elderly people. In 2009, the Advisory Committee held six committee meetings among other sub-committee meetings to conduct its work.

The *National Standards for Homes for elderly people in Malta and Gozo* document was forwarded to the Parliamentary Secretary for the Elderly & Community Care in January 2009 as an initial step towards embarking on a nationwide consultation process on the document. The document incorporates care standards and structural standards, and was divided in stepwise timeframes for gradual implementation. Timeline 1 for the implementation of standards was set and consultation done regarding the process to be implemented.

Formulation of an “Elderly Dependency Measurement” tool

In March 2009, the Advisory Committee compiled an extensive report on *A National Minimum Standard Assessment Tool to Identify Care Needs and Staffing Levels in Homes for the Elderly*. The report was also presented to DG (PHR), Director, (DNSS) and Director, Elderly and Community Care. A supplementary report on the Assessment Tool was submitted to the Department for the Elderly and Community Care. An executive summary report of the study *Selection of an Assessment Tool and its Validation* was sent to the Royal College of Nursing (RCN), UK to obtain permission to use the modified elderly dependency assessment tool. Permission to use the tool was granted by the RCN.

Elderly Dependency Study

A study so as to assess the dependency levels of elderly residents at SVPR was carried out over the summer period. This was done with the help of the Assistant Director and that of two university students who were recruited for over two months so as to help in the data collection. The study will provide the necessary information so that the appropriate workforce level and right mix can be worked out for the elderly residents at St Vincent De Paule. It will also provide benchmarks to similar institutions regarding nurse/carer staffing. It is envisaged that partial results from this study will be available by the end of the first half of 2010.

National standard and guidelines on restraint

The Advisory Committee drafted a proposal for a national standard and guidelines on restraint and submitted the proposal to DG PHR in December 2009.

National Clinical Care Standards

The DNSS is in the process of drafting a set of Clinical Care Standards that will enable all health care service providers to be able to benchmark the quality of services they provide. It will also serve as an

umbrella set for other care standards that will be published during 2010 and after. The Medicines Standards is such an example.

National Medicines Standards

A working group set up in 2008 for the purpose of drafting standards for medicines administration continued with the drafting of the medicines standards document in 2009 with another three work group meetings being held before submitting a draft document to DG PHR in March 2009. A series of meetings were then held to discuss feedback with DG PHR. Expert advice on the draft document medicine standards was sought from the Medicines Authority in August 2009. A series of meetings were held to continue preparing the document prior to finalising it before proposing it for nationwide consultation.

National Intravenous Drug Administration Guidelines

Guidelines for intravenous administration of medicines were drafted during 2009. These guidelines were placed on hold until standards for infusion therapy can be drafted and finalised. However, these guidelines are already taught as part of the Intravenous Therapy Course which is organised by the DNSS.

National Controlled drugs Standards

In March 2009, the working group for medicines standards started reviewing the existing Controlled Drugs Policy. From March to August 2009, six work group meetings were held whereby literature searches, drafting of standards and amending of the current existing document were conducted. The document is currently on hold until the medicines standards document is finalised.

National Transfusion Standards

A working group for transfusion standards was set up in August 2009 with the aim of drafting National Transfusion standards. Following a review of the literature on transfusion, a number of meetings were held and drafting of blood transfusion standards commenced.

National Health Care Agency Standards

A working group set up in 2008 with the aim to draft standards for nursing agencies and an application form to apply for licensing submitted a second final draft version for approval; the document was approved in July 2009. A nationwide consultation on the document is pending.

National Standards for Obstetric and Neonatal Care

DNSS initiated and is working on the drafting of the Infant Feeding Standards with particular emphasis on breastfeeding. These standards will aim towards creating a culture where breastfeeding is considered the norm, and thus improve breastfeeding rates in Malta.

DNSS is represented on Mater Dei Breast Feeding Steering Committee. The aim of this Committee is to work towards the attainment of the Baby Friendly Initiative Award (BFI) provided by UNICEF. The first move towards such award is to provide further education to all maternity health care professionals, and thus a 27-hour breast feeding course has been implemented by the Committee.

Inspection of Health Care Facilities

DNSS supplied staff to the Department of Health Care Service Standards (DHCSS) so that they would form part of the inspectorate team of hospitals and clinics. The DNSS' role as part of this Inspection Team is particularly to inspect and provide feedback from a nursing and midwifery services' standards perspective. During 2009, all private hospitals, private clinics, private elderly homes, church elderly homes and government elderly homes were inspected and are awaiting the licence to be issued so as to cover year

2010. The nurse's role is to see that all the settings in question are in accordance with good and safe practices where it comes to nursing delivery. Great emphasis was given to the ordering, storage and dispensing of Controlled Drugs. In fact the Controlled Drug Audit was introduced and it was top priority to see that such policy is being adhered to by all government and non-government elderly homes, hospitals and clinics. These inspections are related to renewal of licences.

Projects and Initiatives

EN to SN conversion

The DNSS is responsible for the running of the Enrolled Nurse to Staff Nurse (EN to SN) Conversion Course. The main aim of this national project converting the majority of 2nd level (Enrolled) Nurses to 1st level Nurses by the year 2012. This project also aims at delivering the message of real conversion through humanistic adult learning with the main target of bringing positive change in these nurses' working practices. The project was initiated in March 2003 as a continuity of the previous conversion course which was based on the Open McMillan course. From March 2003 to date, 16 courses have been initiated and eleven courses (7 to 17) have been completed successfully while three courses (18 to 20) are still running.

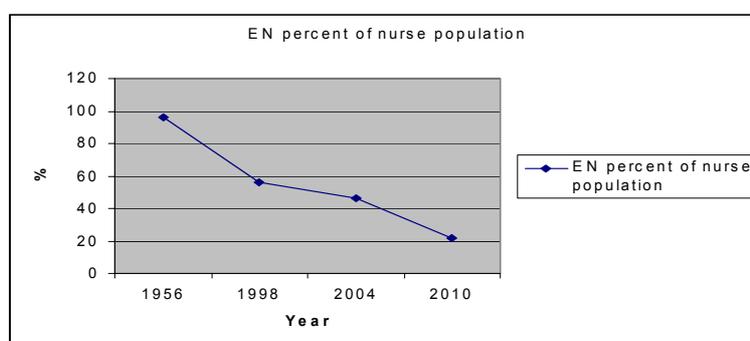


Figure showing the progressive decline of Enrolled Nurse Population

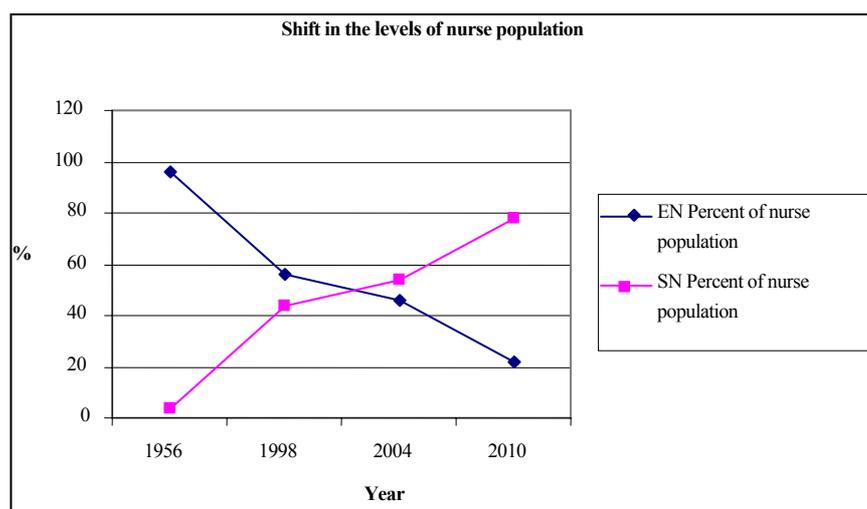


Figure showing the relative shifts between the levels of nursing

From the start of this project till 2009, 493 candidates have started the course in which 340 have successfully become 1st level nurses, while 101 students are still pursuing the course. There were 45 students who discontinued studies, giving an approximate 9% course attrition rate. With two intakes per

year (every March and September), the DNNS will be catering for another eight courses to reach its targets by 2012.

Twenty new preceptors for the course were appointed to aid in the one-to-one clinical supervision of students. The appointed candidates pursued a short train-the-trainers course to enable them to better fulfil their new role.

Intravenous Therapy Course

This is an ongoing national project organised by the Department of Nursing Services Standards to train and provide a certificate of competence to all qualified nurses who work in Malta. This course consists of a two-day course assessed by a written test, a practical clinical assessment and a written self-assessment. During 2009 four courses in Intravenous Drug Administration were organised by the DNSS with a total of 80 nurses completing the programme.

A number of new preceptor for the course were recruited as well as a group of clinical assessors from Mount Carmel Hospital who were given training to assess qualified nurses in Intravenous drug administration.

Hazardous Materials Programme for Emergency First Responders

A Hazardous Materials Committee was set up with the main aim to plan a specialised training programme for Emergency First Responders to be able to identify a Hazardous Materials Incident and how to react appropriately to such an incident. The committee is made up of a number of local experts in the field from different departments namely Civil Protection Department, Armed Forces of Malta, Bomb Disposal, Police and Accident and Emergency Personnel. The target audience for this programme is all the Emergency First Responders who are called in to assist during emergencies that involve hazardous materials, namely staff from Accident and Emergency, Civil Protection, Armed Forces of Malta, Bomb disposal and the Police. A number of meetings were held with all stakeholders involved and all parties agreed on the need of such training. A training programme was designed and the actual training of all the above mentioned personnel is scheduled to commence in 2010.

Therapeutic Manual Handling of patients

In view of the very high rates of sickness absences due to work-related back injuries which consequently leads to substantial costs to employing hospitals, a committee was set up to develop a National Programme on Therapeutic Manual Handling of patients. The purpose of this committee is to standardise practice of moving and handling of patients across all professionals and across all hospitals of Malta. The plan is to set up standard operating procedures based on evidence based practice to provide techniques that are safe to the patient and safe to the healthcare professional. Through this programme, the health care services of Malta will be meeting the standards set by the European commission through the European Directive 90/269/CEE (29 May 1990, OJ 21 June 1990).

A number of meetings have been held with the National Committee for moving and handling.

Mental Health Nursing Services and Education

This department contracts the services of MW Professional Ltd for consultancy and development of Mental Health Nursing in Malta. This company is responsible for the coordination of all courses in Mental Health Nursing being delivered at the IHC and those organised by the DNSS. At present, there are 43 students reading for a degree in mental health nursing, out of which 13 are undergraduate direct entry students and 30 are qualified nursing staff working at Mount Carmel Hospital. In October 2009, a one-year undergraduate certificate CPD programme was approved by the University and the Master's Degree in Mental Health is still awaiting approval to commence.

During 2009, MW Professional Ltd assisted the Malta Association of Psychiatric Nurses (MAPN) with the organisation of two conferences. MW Professional Ltd also assisted with the setting up of the Practice Development Unit at Mount Carmel Hospital.

This is the sixth year of service provided by MW Professional Ltd and this relationship with DNSS was instrumental in challenging the status quo in mental health nursing in Malta and has affected a culture change, a change that left its mark on the type and quality of service offered. It is to be noted that since the commencement of the degree in mental health at the University, 38 nurses graduated with a degree. All community teams in mental health at present are headed by graduate nurses.

MW Professional Ltd drafted the standards for Psychiatric Graduate Nursing in Malta.

Training in Neonatal and Maternal Care

A staff member won a scholarship of two weeks in Singapore in relation to Maternal and Neonatal training. The training aimed to enhance the knowledge and skills on management of mothers in the antenatal, intrapartum and postpartum period as well as neonatal midwifery/nursing management. The recommendations involving advanced midwifery practice that are relevant to our health care system will be put forward during the forthcoming year. Such training, which involved both academic lectures and clinical observations, will facilitate the contrast and comparison of the two health systems of two island states with particular reference to the drafting of Neonatal and Maternal care standards as well as the introduction of systems in connection with Clinical Governance in these respective areas.

Establishment of Specialist Nursing Networks

This department embarked on the setting up of a number of national nursing/midwifery networks. Preliminary meetings were held with various individuals and institutions regarding PDNs, specialist nurses and for nursing research. The main aim of these is to coordinate work being done in various sectors where there are specialist nurse and midwives.

Reports

Risk Assessment at the Medicines Authority

An Occupational Risk Assessment was conducted at the premises of the Medicines Authority of Malta where occupational hazards were identified and advice given on the control measures to mitigate those hazards.

Neuro-rehabilitation Unit

During mid-2009, DNSS was asked to submit a situational report regarding the Neuro-Rehabilitation Unit at Boffa Hospital. Several on-site meetings were carried out with key persons both in the medical, nursing and paramedical fields. The key problem areas were identified and an action plan was formulated. Certain recommendations have been put into practice for the benefit of the said Unit.

Questionnaires

A number of questionnaires were sent by various local and international organisations. These also included a short report on the regulation of support health workers, on the recognition of the EN/SN conversion course, on the effects of the legal notice of the issue of warrants for nurses (Legal notice 276 of 2008), and on the recognition (accreditation) of courses provided by this Department by the Malta Qualifications Council and by OECD on Advance Nurse Practice.

Continuous Professional Development Scheme and Re-organisation of Office Space

The DNSS ceased to be responsible for the coordination of the Continuing Professional Development Scheme which in mid-2009 was handed over to the Resources and Support Division. New premises for the extension of the offices of the DNSS were identified for boardroom use and seminars. This also provided the department with more archival storage and filing space. Departmental library/archives where various documents and materials have been stored, were catalogued.

Council for Nurses and Midwives (CNM)

The coordination and collaboration between the DNSS and CNM is maintained by the Director Nursing Service Standards and of its staff. Attendance to CNM meetings was maintained regularly as well as to sub-committee meetings and attendance to Appeals Committee sessions. The guidelines for registration in all registers for both EU and non-EU countries were reviewed as well as the relevant application forms. A visit to the UK Nursing and Midwifery Council offices and Brussels was undertaken as part of the regulatory midwifery network to review and propose amendments to the EU Directive 36/2005 regarding midwives.

HR Workforce plan for 2010-2020

During 2009, in view of the departmental change in function, the data management function regarding nurse and midwifery deployment was transferred to the Department of Human Resources. However, the DNSS was assigned an ad hoc project under the Health Care Services Division to lead a team to work upon a Workforce Plan for the Maltese Healthcare System for the years 2010-2020. The team met a number of services providers, their heads and heads of professions and a number of other experts and is working on a draft to be presented during 2010. The plan will enable the Ministry to plan and anticipate workforce needs for the State Health Care System. As part of this exercise, DNSS assisted the department of HR with the Capacity Building Exercise for 2010 indicating the required manpower and financial resources needed for MPO and MFEI approval for 2010.

Emergency Response to Pandemic Influenza A (H1N1)

At the outbreak of the Pandemic Flu last June, the whole team at the DNSS was one of the first to give its input in the swabbing and carry out what was necessary so as to prevent the spread of such an infection. All staff at the Department joined all efforts to carry out such a job.

The Director is a member of the National Pandemic Committee. The DNSS provided support to the Department of Health Promotion and Disease Surveillance with the translation of leaflets from English to Maltese.

Other Activities

- Expatriate Nurses: One of the DNSS assisted the HR Manager to advise and assist the Department regarding the recruitment of expatriate nurses.
- Promoting nursing: DNSS staff attended various interviews on different TV programmes to promote nursing as a career, particularly during the summer months, as part of a publicity campaign to attract a good number of students to the nursing courses which this year were changed to a 3-year course from a 4-year course. The result was a record number of applicants, of whom 160 were accepted for both degree and diploma courses.
- Participation in conferences, meetings, etc: Departmental officials attended various conferences, seminars, courses, meetings and workshops both locally and abroad. The Director NSS attended the EU Chief Nursing Officers Meetings in Prague in February 2009 and in Stockholm in October 2009.
- Official Boards: The Director Nursing Services is an ex officio member of the Council for Nurses and Midwives and member of the WHO European Working Group, of Government Chief Nurses in relation to standards of nursing education across Europe; the European Federation of Nursing Regulations working

group to establish standards of nursing education across the EU; and of the working group about nursing regulation across the EU. The Director also acted as Chairperson of the Institute of Health Care Diploma Nursing Board of Studies and Degree Nursing Board of Studies, and Mental Health Studies and of the EN-SN Conversion Course Board of Studies.

DR RAY BUSUTTIL

Director General (Public Health Regulation)

Health, the Elderly and Community Care Sector

Health Care Services Division

OBJECTIVES

The Health Care Services Division coordinates all publicly-funded health care services delivered from hospitals and health centres, residential and long term facilities and community care. The objectives of the Health Care Services Division are to:

- give advice and make recommendations on matters of policy, strategy and overall direction in Health Care Service delivery;
- liaise with stakeholders to facilitate the effective, efficient and timely implementation of endorsed policies, strategies, standards, regulations and change programmes;
- develop synergies and maintain an integrated continuum of services at both community and institutional level;
- promote patients' and users' involvement, rights and obligations;
- monitor patient and user satisfaction and ensure that an effective customer care service and complaints system is in operation;
- carry out regular reviews to assess patients' and users' needs;
- chair the Division's Management Committee made up of the Directors and all heads of service delivery entities;
- ensure an efficient system of procurement, storage and delivery of pharmaceuticals, medical devices, materials and supplies;
- ensure governance of state Health Care services;
- evaluate and review health care services and support their service development and consolidation;
- manage and monitor performance and outcomes, and ensure that effective self-regulation and quality assurance systems are in operation by service delivery entities;
- facilitate the development of operational policies and the introduction of inter-agency protocols that will provide for seamless and personalised services;
- plan and allocate human, financial and other resources and ensure their proper use;
- maintain good public relations, communicate pertinent information, and disseminate good practices;
- develop and maintain networking and partnerships with NGOs, Church, private and public sector organisations and other stakeholders;
- negotiate the purchasing of services and manage service agreements;
- plan for and facilitate programmes for Post-Graduate Training and Continuous Professional Development.

78% of health care services in Malta are publicly-funded. The Division is responsible for coordinating public services and assuring that the services offered are of the highest quality. Partnerships between the public and private sectors, NGOs and other non-governmental entities are being sought to develop services in areas where NGOs, church, and private sector organisations can contribute in a meaningful way to enrich the spectrum of services offered by the public sector.

As of July 2009, a two-year Foundation Training Programme was set up in collaboration with the UK Foundation Programme Office. The objective is to encourage young Maltese doctors to continue their postgraduate training locally and at the same time continue to offer their services locally. As a result of this initiative, 50 medical doctors joined this programme following the completion of their medical degree. Prior to the set-up of this programme, during the first months of 2009, 41 prospective graduates had applied for jobs within UK, of whom 39 were offered a job. As a result of the foundation programme, only 13

decided to pursue their training abroad. This process has succeeded in reversing the negative prospect of about 75% of new medical graduates migrating to the UK to about 80% retention rate. The process for recruiting medical doctors to join the next Foundation Programme due to commence in June 2010 was initiated. After successfully completing this course, doctors can apply for specialty training. A structured post-graduate training programme was implemented across all clinical specialties. This programme builds upon the curricula approved by the Specialist Accreditation Committee (SAC) for each specialty. Doctors are awarded the Certificate of Completion of Specialist Training (CCST) following an intensive specialisation training programme of 6-8 years' duration. A new oncology centre to be developed on a greenfield site at Mater Dei Hospital is expected to be fully functional by 2013. The development plan provides for site preparation works which are proceeding according to schedule. Following extensive discussions, the Medical Brief has been signed by all stakeholders except for the Pharmacy department. All stakeholders were consulted regarding the pre-design drawing for each department/ward/unit of the new Oncology Centre. The adjudication process for the purchasing of the new linear accelerator machines was successfully closed and the tender was awarded. A consultant and a specialist nurse in the Palliative Care Treatment were recruited in 2009 and will be responsible for the development of a new service which will start to be offered at Sir Paul Boffa Hospital.

The National Breast Screening service was launched in October 2009 at the National Breast Screening Centre in Valletta, with a capital investment of €1,600,000. The complete roll-out of this programme is over three years, 2010-2012 targeting women aged 50-59 years. This project includes mammography and ultrasonography equipment which secures a conclusive screening result within 10-12 working days from the mammogram. This ambitious aim was possible because of the active collaboration of medical, imaging and pathology staff with regular weekly interdisciplinary team meetings.

2009 was characterised by the further expansion of new community mental health services and by the continuation of the modernisation programme of the hospital facilities. For the community mental health services, 2009 was a very important year since for the first time a ring-fenced budget was voted for these services. A number of new services were launched during the year, namely a second community outreach team and day centres in Paola and Żejtun. More community workers were also recruited to strengthen existing services. During the year, more than 12,500 patients benefited from the range of services offered by this department. These benefits included community support and counselling to patients, carers and relatives. A team was also set up to consolidate a patient support group while a Journal Club, which is also open to all professional staff within the community teams, was launched at Qormi. At this club, clinical cases and scientific papers are shared and discussed within a multidisciplinary setting.

During 2009, the Division was heavily involved in the Health Ministry response to the Influenza Pandemic. This response involved mainly the acute hospital sector where all the acute care of very sick and critically persons was carried out. Furthermore all virology testing of patients was carried out at the Pathology Laboratory at Mater Dei Hospital, allowing for very close monitoring of the epidemiological progress of the pandemic. The primary care sector was under heavy pressure from the community impact of the disease in the first months and was gearing up for the mass vaccination campaign predicted to start in early 2010. This response was only possible due to detailed planning and preparedness undertaken at various levels during the last four years.

The Health Care Services has been a member of the Working Group on Patient Safety (PSWG) of the EU High Level Group on Health Services and Medical Care, since its inception in 2006. Plans on how to develop and implement strategies to assure patient safety across Europe, are being developed. Further work in this area is linked to the availability of the necessary human resources within the Division to push this issue further and higher on the health care agenda. Discussions regarding the implementation of new informed consent forms within the public health care services have initiated. Drafting of the consent forms will be finalised and piloted by early 2010.

As a full member of HOPE (the European Hospital and Healthcare Federation), the Division continued to be actively involved in the work of its Board of Governors and its subcommittees and working parties.

HOPE is a major lobby group on hospital and health care affairs and is extensively consulted by the institutions of the EU particularly the European Commission and the European Parliament. It is very well networked with other major stakeholders in the EU health arena, and has developed over the years and still maintains a solid information base about planning and operation of hospital services and of the health systems. One of the Federation's priorities is the exchange programme for health care professionals, which has fostered for the last 40 years the management training of health care professionals across the EU. Maltese health care managers have benefited regularly from this programme since Malta joined HOPE in 2000. HOPE is also a useful forum to push further national agendas on hospital and health care issues that arise within the EU. The Director General of Health Care Services is in his second year of presidency of HOPE.

Within the framework of the Public Administration Act during 2010, Government will commence with the decentralisation programme with the aim to improve efficiency and effectiveness of the managerial structures of hospitals and units. The first unit within this programme shall be the National Blood Transfusion Centre.

One of the objectives of the Division is to guarantee a high quality of service. In response to the ongoing EU agenda and following an assessment of anti microbial resistance carried out in 2009, a structured programme across all units and services will be undertaken for the years 2010 and 2011 to curtail antibiotic use and to reduce health care associated infections. Each hospital and service will work against agreed reduction targets.

The establishment of clinical guidelines to streamline care pathways and improve efficiency in the clinical management of patients within Mater Dei Hospital has been initiated. Discussions were initiated with Sir Paul Boffa Hospital in preparation of the migration to the new Oncology Centre. A project regarding the human resources future projections for all the departments within all entities has been carried and will be finalised in early 2010. The need for re-engineering is greatly felt across the health care services, hence discussions are ongoing to address this issue.

MATER DEI HOSPITAL (MDH)

The main objectives at Mater Dei Hospital (MDH) for 2009 were to:

- develop more comprehensive and efficient management systems in the areas of engineering, human resources, facilities management, information management, finance, medical equipment, inventory management and support services, among others;
- enhance the quality of the various services offered, both clinical and non-clinical; and
- increase the quantity of services, especially in those areas in which waiting lists exist

Hospital Management

Several quality improvement initiatives were taken in 2009, including: the completion and implementation of patient information booklets; installation of more suggestion boxes; formulation of educational/informative messages for A&E department, main reception, OPD reception and patient areas; re-collection and re-collation of information for MDH website; the building of a communication network between MDH and general practitioners; participation in radio and television programmes; monitoring of Did Not Attend rates at the Out-patient Department; formulation of guidelines for the issuing of permits for relatives outside normal hours; introduction of a queuing colour-coded system at the ophthalmic out-patient clinic; restructuring of the letter of appointment; revision of the procedure for booking of illegal immigrants and inmates; formulation of standard operating procedures for access of information; review of working practices at the pharmacy out-patient; review of the procedure for purchasing of medicines after hours; introduction of an alert system for medical image tests; participation in the introduction of cultural mediator service; participation in the designing of a questionnaire in preparation for patients' satisfaction survey; and

the participation in two international performance indicator programme benchmarking initiatives. With the expansion of the vetting system, the filtering of referral letters by customer care management and the inclusion of general practitioners in the customer care department's communication network, the rate for wrong referrals was brought down to <1%.

The human resource plan for such a large organisation needs to be dynamic in order to ensure a real time situation that can respond to emerging needs. In response to the Government's policy priority to reduce waiting lists, an ad hoc Waiting List Initiative HR Plan was submitted to the Ministry for Social Policy. This document highlighted the need to ensure the proper use of acute beds, estimated the number of nurses required and recommended the setting up of a specific project team to steer this initiative.

MDH enrolled in the Performance Assessment Tool for Hospitals (PATH) which is an international benchmarking initiative that will be used by management to spearhead the introduction of Quality Measurement for hospitals.

Like other countries, the Maltese Islands were affected by the Influenza A (H1N1v) pandemic; IM&T at MDH responded to this challenge very rapidly, with the successful design, development and implementation of a bespoke National Pandemic Database system with the scope of:

- recording all national pandemic cases in a centralised manner;
- controlling the dispensing of anti-viral drugs;
- facilitating the monitoring of anti-viral drugs stock levels in the dispensing outlets (governmental dispensaries and hospitals);
- preventing patients from collecting the medicinal more than once;
- keeping real-time records of all the collections in a centralised and secure repository;
- providing management with necessary statistical reports 'on the fly'; and
- recording of vaccinations (starting late in December 2009).

A team of 10 general practitioners were engaged on contract for services to see and treat category 3 patients for a period of 12 months.

An agreement was reached between DAKAR and MITA on the implementation of the DAKINET system, which ensures access to Dakar by all personnel and Salaries employees, and also gives access to information to staff working at MDH. Standard Operating Procedures were set up for all day-to-day issues including Dakar, CME, Staff Identification Office and Induction. New policies were issued, including CME/CPE, Free Staff Meals and Alerting Security Personnel.

143 new or transferred members of staff attended one of the six induction courses that were organised. A number of in-house courses were organised for Porters, Ambulance Drivers, Food Handlers and Medical Secretaries. Training initiatives abroad were also coordinated, including repairs and servicing of medical equipment and visits to hospitals abroad.

650 professionals are entitled for the continuous Medical/Pharmacist/Dental Education scheme. This year, 250 applications were approved. During the past three years, an increase in total submission of applications was noted (22% in 2007; 34% in 2008; 46% in 2009) especially due to a considerable increase in submission of study leave (10% increase) and qualification allowance (a 2% increase) applications.

During the year, 130 Form 2 students from private schools visited MDH. An agreement was reached with the Guidance and Counselling Unit of the Education Division for weekly visits from public school secondary students as of 2010. This will include about 600 students and a presentation from this team will be delivered. A Job Shadowing programme is also being discussed with the same unit. A student handbook was drawn up for this purpose.

The Voluntary Services within MDH continued to strengthen during 2009, and with new recruits, it now involves a total of 150 volunteers. The key services include guiding patients to wards and out-patients,

delivery of refreshments at the Out-Patients Department, cookery and pottery to psychiatric out-patients and visiting of long-term patients. A Voluntary Committee was set up and developed a Voluntary Policy. During 2010 it is being planned to expand the services to other wards.

The Customer Care Department received more than 3,000 tickets of referral for new case appointments. The telephone system handled 411,795 external calls and 437,806 internal calls, i.e. an average of 2,327 contacts per day. 560 requests were received from individuals for copies of medical files, copies of reports of medical images, copies of medical images on CD and DVD, copies of laboratory results, and requests to view their medical file. More than 1,000 requests from insurance companies were also processed.

5,121 complaints were reported at Customer Care this year, mainly on inappropriate attitudes of clinical staff; long waiting time to be given a bed, for both elective and emergency cases; long waiting time at A&E, or to be given an out-patient appointment, or a date for surgical operations; out of stock of pharmaceutical items; misplaced medical files; and other issues. Around 70% of all cases were resolved or given a suitable solution at the time of reporting, 20% within 48 hours, while 10% in a week or more.

The year was a very busy one for the Information Management and Technology (IM&T) Directorate at MDH as it faced the challenge of managing and supporting an increased number of information systems and services. The highlights of the year included: Successful roll-out of electronic requesting of medical images in all MDH wards (except ITU); Successful Go-Live of Blood Bank module of Laboratory Information System; Creation of PACS accounts for all clinical-year medical students; Deployment of 539 new leased desktop and laptop PCs through the Desktop Services project; Comprehensive IT training and support for over 50 new doctors in the Foundation Programme, including implementation of ePortfolio; Deployment of two new in-house servers; Successful implementation of National Pandemic Flu Monitoring System and other IT-related pandemic control measures; “Go-Live” of Staff Meals Entitlement System; Migration of Visiting Consultant Clinic System; Successful hosting of several new applications, including the Waiting List Program and the Staff Meal Entitlement System; Extension of Access Accounts Dimensions system to more Stores at MDH; Creation of new IM&T Client Services function; Successful expansion of KURA (MDH Intranet) services, including launch of “Medical Training Events Calendar” and other reports and news services; Completion of full Data Protection Audit at MDH ; Improved organisation of the ICT Exemptions and Waivers process through the ICT Governance function.

In 2009, a response rate greater than 80% in the Electronic Case Summary system was achieved for the first time. 461,531 files were loaned out by the Medical Records Department which is double the volume that used to be carried out when Medical Records was functioning at SLH, but the problem file rate was reduced to just 0.07% or 320 files. On 28 May, the Medical Video Conferencing service was launched, followed, in July, by regular delivery of lectures to MDH paediatricians via international ISDN-based video-conferencing.

The MDH IT Training & Application Support section continued to offer both training and application support in the various applications used by the hundreds of users at the hospital. Training and application support were given on iCM Results Viewing to the nursing staff at MDH. Training was also given to practically all the medical staff at MDH so that they could start placing requests for Medical Images electronically. The PAS remained a very important tool in the administration of patients within the hospital. During this year, assistance was given in the creation of templates for the Tissue Viability Unit and the Bone Density Department and the A&E. As of July of 2009, the ePortfolio was introduced at MDH. This application records the training activities of all doctors in the Malta Foundation Programme. Training was given to the trainees, and the educational and clinical supervisors.

KURA has established itself as the premier source of information via intranet at MDH; moreover, its effectiveness as an extranet can also be attested to with a total of 1,453,623 page views, equivalent to 3,983 page views per day. Services provided through KURA included 162,487 requests for Medical Files, using the Medical Record Request Service (a 67% increase over 2008). 5,211 new Customer Care Request forms were logged into the Customer Care database. Upgrades to KURA this year included: Creation of a

reporting application for the Customer Care and Medical Records Departments, whereby the managers in these departments would be able to extract data from their respective Applications/Services hosted on KURA with the facility to generate customised reports according to their requirement; Creation of a statistical report for administrative purposes; Creation in the Info Centre/Reference materials section of Kura of a new library for Standard Operating Procedures; Updating of the Search facility; Addition of an editing facility to the News Editorial function.

During 2009, the Purchasing Department started to process both Health departmental tenders and MFEI Contracts tenders which previously used to be managed by the Head Office. During such time the department embarked on an intensive exercise of aligning its various contracts and procurement practices and operational procedures with the Procurement legislation. The Inspectorate Unit carried out spot checks on approximately 660 items. The Engineering Store was assembled early this year and was operational by 20 July 2009. It is catering for 1,740 items which were previously handled by the appointed Contractor. During 2009, the Conjoint Store for medical devices processed and delivered 7,205 items to cost centres within MDH. The total number of items that were processed and distributed to all cost centres by the Disposable Stores, amounted to 131,069 items. 1,237 items were distributed throughout all cost centres within MDH by the Biomedical Stores. The Provision Section processed and distributed a total of 39,520 items to all cost centres.

The Logistics Department analysed all activities with the objective to build a structure to monitor, forecast and predict continuously changes in trends and requirements, enhance materials management and inventory control whilst strengthening control mechanisms for the utilisation of materials. This year the department implemented control measures, reviewed quotas and studied flow of materials in preparation to resubmit smart solution proposals to cater for MDH needs.

To move in the direction of having more detailed information on the consumption of materials, especially in the theatres, a study was started in mid-2009, in all theatres, Endoscopy and Cath lab. This was done to identify the necessary investment needed in respect of both human and financial resources, in order to have an appropriate traceability system in this respect and to gain a deeper insight of the vast and complex activity at theatre stores and to observe the flow of materials from the buffer stores at: Inpatient theatre store, Anaesthesia store, Day Care and Uro-dynamics Store, Anaesthesia DSU store, Endoscopy store and Catheterisation Laboratory.

Medical Administration

Through the appointment of the new medical administration, the principles and objectives of delivery of care went beyond case based management and moved to administration and management using evidence based data registered on the hospital information systems. Looking back on a year of review, it is fair to state that clinical accountability started to become a reality based on the evidence of data.

A stronger public health presence was enforced through the introduction of the concept of health promotion evaluation and certification of all products and information distributed at MDH with the help of the Disease Surveillance and Health Promotion Department. The medical representatives were asked to submit samples of their products, flyers, booklets etc for evaluation. Once approval was received in writing, the medical representatives were informed and given approval to distribute at MDH. When advertising was not in accordance with Health Promotion principles, medical representatives were asked to remove these products and information prior to distribution.

The Directorate General, Strategy and Sustainability was instrumental in helping MDH to secure standards with regard to treating non-Maltese patients at MDH and regarding Maltese patients being sent abroad for treatments, in addition to MDH introducing standard protocols on sending medical escorts and blood/histology samples abroad, amongst various other issues. In turn, MDH, with the help of the Clinical Chairpersons, assisted DG S&S in identifying standard and non-standard health care packages in relation to medical procedures and surgical operations carried out at MDH.

In collaboration with the Directorate General for Health Care Services, several issues were tackled in relation to complaints on medical care received, human resources, union directives, clinical issues arising out of duty hours, guidelines, and the establishment of foundation and postgraduate training.

The DG Health Care Services assisted and supported MDH with regard to legal issues and court cases. 2009 saw a complete revisit of the process with all system partners and this led to a standard manner in which court citations are processed, the final objective being that the medical doctor in charge of the case attends court and gives evidence.

In relation to requests submitted through the Customer Care Department for patients' access to their own medical file, in addition to patient requests consultants started to be advised of requests for disclosure of information. Concerning requests for a change in consultant care, requests were permitted only on condition that both the former and the incumbent consultants were informed and found no objection, thus ensuring continuity of care.

The Medical Administration set out clear policy with regard to the following:

- Round-the-clock patient responsibility
- Intermediary Care Patients i.e: Rehabilitation, Long Term Care: Revised Flagging System
- Medical Doctors Reporting Sick
- Valid Vacation leave documents for Medical Staff
- 'Consent form' for Surgical Operation/Interventions
- Filling Death Certificates with Full details
- Writing Clearly and Legibly in Patient histories and Files
- On-call consultant responsibility at MDH
- Regularly publishing on KURA delegated coverage when Chairperson on leave
- Protected time for Postgraduate & Foundation Training.

The Medical Administration played a pivotal role in the Ministry's project of costing for the first time all clinical activity at MDH and ensured that, through the inclusion of all clinical partners in this exercise, would bring about a fuller awareness of accountability and the cost of services offered at MDH. Clinical Chairs were introduced to the concept of cost centres and made aware of their departments' cost in terms of payrolls and clinical activity. This exercise was completed with estimating actual costs and direct/indirect costs in relation to operating theatre clinical activity. In fact this data was one of the main essential used in procuring finance for the forthcoming initiative on the 'waiting lists'. The clinical staff are progressively taking ownership of the hospital performance rather than just treating it as a place they came for work. This climate of accountability and collaboration augurs well for the future.

The Wait List Information System was piloted following extensive discussions with the Clinical Chair and Consultants in the Department of Orthopaedics with regard to centralising their wait lists information. Individual consultant wait lists data was cleaned and duplicates identified. All deaths were identified and removed. Duplicated waits were identified and the uploading of the Orthopaedic wait list data began in the second half of 2009.

With the help of the Clinical Chairs and the consultants in the specialities, MDH management was able to enforce daily discharges including weekends and public holidays. However this proactive clinical bed management was not without incident and at times patients had to wait for a bed at the A&E department. Various solutions were adopted in view of union directives that were in force with regard to bed utilisation.

Throughout 2009, the operating theatres needed regular intervention with regard to their running, due mainly to lack of nursing resources, and occasionally lack of beds for post operative care. With the help of the whole operating team, no patient was cancelled due to a lack of beds or human resources. This was a mammoth task given the bed crisis right through the year. 2009 also saw a surge in theatre operating activity and the rate of increase was almost 8% when compared to 2008. This could only be achieved by the goodwill and commitment of the whole operating team. In fact 2009 saw extra lists being performed in addition to routine lists being extended.

Migrant health encounters at hospital were seriously addressed with the objective of reducing repeat encounters. Patient information in three African languages was introduced. Several leaflets were published at MDH on Primary Health Care Services, H1NI, hygiene etc. Other problems addressed were: understanding prescribed medication and treatments, scheduling of out-patient appointments, attending elective admissions and operations. It is felt that MDH requires cultural mediators on a full-time basis and talks are underway on how to procure this service in areas of obstetrics, A&E, Out-Patients and wards.

Performance Review and Analysis

The total bed complement in MDH (as at 31 December 2009) stood at 977 beds. This figure includes all beds and cots in use at MDH on the stipulated date. The total number of beds available for In-Patients stood at 830 at the end of 2009. The remaining 147 beds include day care beds at the Renal Unit, Catheterisation Suite, Day Surgery Unit (14 bedded endoscopy area and 15 beds from Day Surgery), Nursery cots, Burns Unit, Paediatric Day Centre and Sleep Lab. The total number of Day Care beds available amounted to 78 beds. The Burns Unit (five beds) remained not functional and hence does not form part of the bed complement at MDH to date.

The total available bed days in 2009 were 356,745. If adjusted to exclude 41,900 Day Care bed days and 11,895 bed days in Nursery cots, the available bed days for In-Patients were 302,950 days. The total occupied bed days in In-Patient beds and Nursery cots were 275,489 days. The adjusted average bed occupancy was 87.5%. The turnover rate was 77.1 patients per In-Patient bed throughout the year 2009 (adjusted to exclude Day Care beds & Nursery cots) whilst the adjusted turnover interval (the mean length of time that a hospital In-Patient bed is left empty between successive patients) was 0.6 days. The average ward length of stay of all patients was 4.1 days. The total number of registered in-patient admissions stood at 50,192 (to which must be added 3,496 nursery admissions) whilst the Transfers-in to the wards stood at 15,196 (to which must be added 67 transfers to Nursery). The number of registered in-patients treated and discharged was 49,518 discharges (to which must be added 3,456 discharges from Nursery). The total number of registered deaths occurring in admitted patients was 1,508. The total number of registered day cases was 30,919 which included 12,529 day cases to the Renal Unit for dialysis session.

The total number of attendances registered at the Accident and Emergency Department in 2009 amounted to 101,439. The referral source for the registered attendances showed that 68,480 or 68% of attendances were self-referred whilst 21,201 were GP referrals and 10,528 were health centre referrals, which means that primary care services were responsible together for 31% of all referrals. There were 442,642 registered attendances at out-patient clinics according to the out-patient module of the PAS.

There were a total of 38,743 surgical operations and interventions carried out in 2009 (Surgical Operation Episodes: 35,975 in 2008). Thus operating activity registered a rise of 2,768 episodes. This is an average of 109 per day (2008: Average 99/Day) and an average of 3,229 operations/interventions per month (2008: Average/month: 2,998). Of these, 15.5% were emergencies and 84.5% were elective episodes. The distribution by category was:

Category	2009	2008	+/-	% Change
Complex Major	1,754	1,674	+80	+4.8%
Major +	3,241	2,539	+702	+27.7%
Major	5,686	5,624	+62	+1.1%
Intermediate	14,325	12,774	+1,551	+12.1%
Minor	13,474	13,111	+363	+2.8%
Unspecified	263	253	+10	+4.0%
Total	38,743	35,975	+2,768	+7.7%

The performance of the Department of Anaesthesia throughout the year was characterised by the consolidation of existing services; quality control and maintenance of standards of care through audit and analysis of critical incidents; and expansion of services as needs were identified. The department carried out continuous professional development and provided structured teaching of anaesthetic junior staff.

The total number of patients seen at the Department of Dental Surgery was:

New cases	21,143
Follow-ups	4,343
Other	3,022
Walk-in patients	4,878
Total patients	33,386

There were 2,875 contacts in Consultant Clinics, 72 in the Cleft Lip and Palate Clinic and 4,719 in the Consultant Child Dental Clinic. 1,430 treatments under local anaesthesia were performed. 359 procedures were performed under general anaesthesia. 5,462 cases were seen in Orthodontics.

Totals of patients seen by Dental Hygienists were: 2,561 at MDH; 6,312 at Primary Health Care; and 256 at SVPR.

The performance of the Department of Pathology during 2009 was as follows:

Test Requests		
Pathology Section	2008	2009
Bacteriology	748,224	760,088
Biochemistry	2,834,259	2,698,170
Cytogenetics	279	403
Cytology	10,330	10,351
Emergency Laboratory *	0	0
Haematology	730,280	856,743
Haematology, ACC clinic	50,031	61,789
Histology * *	71,487	76,318
Immuno Histochemistry	8,331	8,324
Mortuary	2,718	3,059
Hosp Blood Bank	84,889	134,769
Immunology	99,128	76,495
Molecular Genetics	11,819	13,232
Reference Lab	12,181	14,424
Toxicology	58,965	63,216
Mycology	5,254	5,622
Virology	67,951	75,995
Total	4,796,126	4,858,998

Notes: *Emergency Laboratory totals now form part of Haematology and Biochemistry totals and are not being kept separately.

**Histology totals are now divided into Histology, Immunohistochemistry and mortuary since these have become different cost centres.

The Pharmacy Department was responsible for the supply and distribution of medicines worth about €22 million (6.4% increase over 2008). Approximately 52% were external costs, representing medicines dispensed to out-patients. Circa 48% was the cost of medicines supplied to wards and departments within MDH. A 12% increase in expenditure was registered for in-patients over 2008.

A total of 104,221 patients attended MDH Out-Patient Pharmacy in 2009 and these patients were dispensed with 243,101 items – an average of 362 patients per working day. This was a 4.3% increase compared to the number of patients who attended MDH in 2008. This could be attributed to the high number of patients calling at MDH Pharmacy to collect medicines not available at Primary Care and POYC pharmacies which is equivalent to 13% of the total patient workload.

The value of 6,336 sales to private entities for 2009 was of circa €316,200.

Throughout the year, 10 refugees and 115 illegal immigrants attended Mater Dei Pharmacy to be dispensed free medication. This was a decrease of 57% over the number who had attended in 2008 (291 in total).

The in-patients' service dispenses medicines which are not distributed in wards from the Stores:

- A total of 6,302 orders were dispensed to wards, of which 2,891 orders were for psychotropic medicines and 3,411 orders were for narcotic drugs. There were 109 patients requiring methadone administration throughout 2009, and a total of 21.169 litres of methadone mixture was dispensed.
- 287 emergency drug drawers were exchanged during 2009 with a total of 1,335 items being exchanged during emergency cases.
- 278 oxygen cylinders were given on loan (194 of which were new cases). There were 194 returned flow meters during 2009.
- Throughout the second half of the year, oseltamivir dispensing to H1N1 positive patients was introduced. A total of 702 adults and 434 paediatric cases were dispensed antivirals between July and December 2009.

The Pharmacy also provided a 24x7 emergency service. The following services were provided after-hours:

- 1,904 sales equivalent to €8,430;
- 9,115 issues to outpatients;
- 20,947 urgent transactions with wards, of which 929 were for controlled drugs;
- 261 requests for domiciliary oxygen;
- 13,484 items dispensed from the in-patients section to 5,324 discharged patients; a further 14,661 items dispensed to discharged patients after hours.

Throughout 2009 the clinical pharmacists made a total of 14,512 interventions, a net increase of 12.5% over the total interventions carried out the previous year. A cost-saving exercise was carried out, resulting in a total saving of €164,740.66.

A total of 464 patients were dispensed their anti-tuberculosis medication from MDH Pharmacy throughout 2009. There were 147 new stomas, whilst 31 patients were reversed, 81 patients collected their Clozapine treatment on a regular basis and another 253 patients were dispensed Methylphenidate 10mg tablets.

During 2009 the Rheumatology pharmacist screened approximately 200 patients. This year, 14 patients were started on the tumour necrosis factor inhibitors. The entitlement for free HIV treatment was reviewed for all 100 patients on anti-retroviral treatment in collaboration with the Department for Pharmaceutical Policy and Monitoring. There were a total of 290 patient attendances at the pharmacist-led anti-retroviral clinic.

The Medicines Information Section in 2009 received a total of 1,563 requests for information, a 51% increase from 2008.

The statistics for chemotherapy show that the workload increased by 13.8% over 2008 (n=3377 for 2009). A 138% increase was registered for oral liquids, mainly as a result of oseltamivir liquid preparation since the beginning of December. A 37% increase in topical preparations was also registered whilst a 21.5% decrease in number of sachets prepared was registered.

The following developments were achieved so as to improve efficiency and quality of service:

- The re-ordering system in all stores sections of the Pharmacy was revised, with the aim to minimise stock-outs and stock wastages.
- The queuing system was upgraded and it now manages multiple queues, thus minimising patient complaints.
- Hospital staff was reminded regarding the policy for collection of medicines by hospital staff whereby prescriptions are left at the Pharmacy and collected within two days.
- The custom lists of a number of medicines were revised, thus simplifying the ordering system for wards.
- A new in-patients database system was introduced to centralise all in-patients requests on named-patient basis and keep accurate data of in-patients approvals.
- In September, a new Out-Patients' Formulary and Hospital Formulary were issued by the DPPM. This meant that the entitlement criteria of a number of items were changed. These changes had to be communicated to patients who had to be guided on how to satisfy these entitlement requirements in order for them to continue to be dispensed these drugs.
- Reorganisation and better distribution of work across the in-patients, out-patients and support sections of the Pharmacy.

- The services of the Medicines Approval Section were transferred over to DPPM. This entailed the completion of a new database and the transfer of staff over to DPPM.

A total of 10,078 patients were referred for treatment by the Physiotherapy Department during their hospital admission. Between them, these in-patients received 62,945 treatment sessions. This represents a 5.9% increase in the referrals and a 4.7% increase in the number of treatment sessions over 2008. A 3.3% increase was registered in the number of new referrals from the medical wards and specialties with a concomitant increase of 14.8% in treatment sessions. A total of 9,883 adult patients were referred, either from out-patient clinics and A&E or as follow-ups from the in-patient wards. Of the total number of new patients referrals, 1,705 were re-directed to health centres and SVPR (out-patient treatment), leaving a total 7,915 patients (an increase of 12.8%) who were treated at SLH and 263 adult patients treated at MDH, an increase of 24%. There were 930 new paediatric out-patient referrals in 2009. The Paediatric Physiotherapy Service also provides a service to two schools with special needs. At San Miguel School, 43 students were on treatment and received 817 treatment sessions, whereas 17 students at Helen Keller received 382 treatment sessions.

During 2009 the CSSD processed the following materials/incrustations:

Individual Packed Items	124,146
Operation Packs	68,678
Laundry Packing	83,940

MOUNT CARMEL HOSPITAL

Overview

The main targets for Mount Carmel Hospital (MCH) for 2009 were:

- introduction of new community mental health services including Roaming Health Centre Clinics, a second community outreach team and day centres in Paola, and Żejtun;
- activities to promote a better image of Mount Carmel Hospital to combat stigma;
- continuation of the modernisation programme of the hospital facilities, including refurbishment of the Dual Diagnosis Unit, Male Ward 1, the Learning Disability Unit and the Female Hostel;
- completion of San Ġorġ Preca and Sta Bernardetta Wards;
- upgrading of the IT software and network infrastructure at the hospital;
- transfer of the boiler house from under MCH management to KOLS Ltd. This is expected to result in an annual saving of thousands of euros in fuel and salaries.
- appointment of a Manager Nursing Services and a Financial Controller.
- staff training with the aim of improving the quality service provision for those suffering from serious and highly distressing mental health problems.

Performance Review and Analysis

There were 1,220 total in-patient admissions of which: 428 were first admissions, 792 re-admissions. Another 95 were re-transferred from other hospitals. 1,149 patients were discharged from the hospital. The following are some abridged activity figures:

Admissions	Totals
Informal	746
Compulsory	474
Total	1,220
Re-transferred	95

During 2009, the Psychiatric Out-Patients' Department followed up a total of 10,830 patients, and 606 new cases referred since January 2009. A total of 104 patients were transferred for the first time to local clinics

to be seen by the Roaming Health Centre Clinics and 73 patients were admitted to MCH or the Short Stay Psychiatric Unit at Mater Dei Hospital.

Roaming Health Centres Clinics are found at Floriana, Gzira, Mosta and Paola Health Centres. The team, together with a doctor from the designated firms, visits each centre an average of twice a month. The team has a total of 1,002 patients registered (364 male and 638 female). 162 (16.2%) of these patients receive regular depot injections. 113 new referrals were logged during 2009. A total of 2,787 interventions were carried out.

The Community Department expanded its service considerably with a second Outreach Team, a Day Centre in Paola and another one in Żejtun. During 2009, a total of 12,679 patients made use of the services provided by this Department.

The Outreach Team offered its services to a total of 80 patients. A further 37 are currently on the waiting list. The patients benefited from a total of 5,428 interventions during the year, giving an average of 67.9 visits per patient during the year.

116 patients were admitted to the Dual Diagnosis Unit, 38 were referred from Sedqa's Out-patient Detox Service, 28 from Caritas and the remaining 50 from either GPs or transfer from other wards.

Developments

A Manager Nursing Services and a Nurse Education Coordinator were appointed. The Nurse development Unit was launched which is in line with the management's policy of raising the professional standards of nurses at MCH. A training programme under the auspices of the Anaesthesia Department at Mater Dei Hospital was also launched for the Emergency Response Team. This programme is aimed at medical doctors, nurses and nursing aides.

St Ġorġ Preca and Sta Bernardetta Wards were completed. Male Ward 1, the Learning Disability Unit, the Dual Diagnosis Unit and Female Wards 3A & 3B were refurbished. The boiler house was transferred from under MCH management to KOLS Ltd. Prior to the transfer, two small domestic boilers were purchased and installed, resulting in annual savings of thousands of euros in fuel and salaries since domestic boilers are equipped to operate unattended.

During May, the Female Hostel was badly damaged after a fire broke out, but was refurbished within four days. Other important works carried out include the upgrading of the kitchen and the refurbishment of community centres.

Several new operational protocols at Young People's Unit were introduced this year including one restricting the admission of youngsters less than twelve years. The Short Stay Psychiatric Unit is also controlled by an updated protocol.

A new Financial Controller was appointed half way through the year facing new challenges which include the expansion of the community services and the increased investment in information technology. These changes brought with them new roles, increased demand for goods and services particularly emoluments, provision items and operating supplies.

IT software and network infrastructure at the hospital were substantially upgraded to facilitate the operations and will continue to expand during the coming years.

Finance Department

2009 was a very challenging year mainly due to the increase in salaries following the expansion of community services and collective agreements.

The following is a brief analysis of the recurrent expenditure for 2009:

	€
Salaries	16,091,468
Utilities	847,637
Materials and Supplies	922,967
Improvements to Property	272,991
Repair and Upkeep	182,063
Rent	413,930
Transport	71,271
Contractual Services	378,966
Other expenses	57,647
Total	19,238,940

The original projections versus actual expenditure for 2009 were as follows:

	€
Original 2009 projections	19,853,804
Actual Expenditure	19,238,940

Budget Holders managed to save €58,000, which can be invested in better facilities.

SIR PAUL BOFFA HOSPITAL

Overview

- Finalising and signing of the Medical Brief for the new Oncology Centre. Prior to this, the finalisation of users' requirements and a bed modelling exercise was carried out.
- Architects and engineers completed the pre-design drawing for each department/ward/unit of the new Oncology Centre.
- The European Regional Development Fund Application form was submitted by FMS.
- Concluded the Adjudication Process for the purchasing of the linear accelerator machines. The process was successfully closed and the tender was awarded.
- Provided information and worked with FMS in a Cost Benefit Analysis Exercise for the New Oncology Centre, in preparation for a funding proposal from EU Structural Funds.
- Contingency plan drawings for linear accelerator temporary installation were discussed with the key stakeholders at SPBH and FMS.
- Participated in MDH-pandemic preparedness meetings
- Working with key stakeholders regarding the implementation of the migration of the Neuro Rehabilitation Unit from SPBH to KGH.

Performance Review and Analysis

During the year, 30,113 Dermatology out-patient/day-case visits were performed. This translates into a 5.3% increase in visits turnover compared to the year 2008. The detailed activity was as follows: 5,310 routine new cases, 1,578 urgent new cases, 4,933 follow ups, 1,805 minor operations, 105 patch tests, 4,278 leg ulcer patients, 246 plastic surgery, 445 skin tags, 3,227 wart removals, 2,835 GU clinic patients, 5,120 PUVA treatments, 230 laser treatments.

During 2009, there were a total of 77 admissions.

The Oncology Department had 1,189 new patients seen; of these, 761 received radiotherapy at the time of presentation, 341 received chemotherapy as out-patients. The number of treatment sessions was as follows: Radiotherapy – 16,737; Chemotherapy – 6,719; Simulator Planning – 1,320; Mould Room Shells - 99; Cobalt Planning 193; Linac Verification of Films – 468. Furthermore, 40 High Dose Radioactive Iodine; 22 Low Dose Radioactive Iodine and two Caesium insertion treatments were administered in the Isotope

Administration Unit. The Department catered for 1,378 inpatient admissions. An additional 243 day-cases were attended to. Concerning overall gender distribution, 49.5% were males and 50.5% were females.

The Pharmacy Department at Boffa Hospital is divided in three sections, namely the Cytotoxic Reconstitution Services, the Dispensary, as well as the Pharmacy Stores, which supply both medicinals and equipment to the other two sections. The pharmacy dispensary at Sir Paul Boffa Hospital is responsible for the dispensing to dermatology and oncology out-patients. The total number of items dispensed to out-patients in 2009 was 67,834. The number of extemporaneous preparations for dermatology out-patients was 3,737. The number of items dispensed to the wards was 18,838. A total of around 9,000 chemotherapy doses were reconstituted throughout 2009, an average of 35 doses per day.

There were 5,698 physiotherapy treatment sessions for 1,297 patients.

The Lymphoedema Clinic continued its services. 292 patients were referred, 111 being new patients. 1,238 treatment sessions were offered to this patient group.

A total of 60 patients were treated at the Neuro Rehabilitation Unit during 2009. Several meetings were held regarding the migration of this service to the Rehabilitation Services at Karen Grech Hospital. 78 new patients were referred for treatment at the Neuro-Rehabilitation Physiotherapy Service. Throughout the year, there was an increase in the number of patients suffering from Polyneuropathies whilst patients with Multiple Sclerosis were admitted for short periods of intensive rehabilitation. A Physiotherapy Service Information Leaflet was prepared to give information to patients and their relatives before admission to the NRU.

The Social Work Unit at Boffa Hospital continued to work with several patients and their families referred, in accordance with the Agreement of services signed between Aġenzija Appoġġ and the Department of Health in April 2000. The work carried out with 196 patients and several family members, shows the professional commitment taken by the Unit to serve people in physical and psychosocial distress, presented by the three fields in Boffa Hospital, namely: Oncology, Palliative Care and Dermatology (134 patients) and the Neuro Rehabilitation Unit (62 patients). This work included: Assessment, planning, interventions, counselling; family therapy sessions; follow-ups, recording and other useful relevant work on the cases referred.

Throughout 2009, the oncology and palliative care team continued to offer its services to the in-patients and out-patients at Sir Paul Boffa Hospital. Most in-patient referrals were palliative, with the majority of problems being related to mobility and respiratory problems. The out-patient services were available for patients who were discharged from the wards directly referred from the Radiotherapy Department or by their consultants from other hospitals and institutions.

A study entitled *Mobility of oncology patients hospitalised at Sir Paul Boffa Hospital before and after physiotherapy intervention* has been ongoing since 2008. The objective of the study remains to assess the influence that physiotherapy intervention has on mobility and function in oncology and palliative care patients experiencing mobility problems.

4,275 patients attended the Occupational Department. 14,104 units (one unit is equivalent 10-15 min) were delivered, of which 3,659 were in-patient sessions and 616 were out-patient sessions. In the Oncology Section, assessment and follow-up treatment of both male and female wards is carried out. In- and out-patients from radiotherapy or chemotherapy are seen following referrals from the palliative clinic that takes place once a week (as of December 2009, this has increased to two days per week) with the multidisciplinary team so as to be able to offer home visits where necessary, hence reaching more patients within the community that are not usually admitted. For Dermatology patients, assessment and follow-up treatment is carried out in wards. In the Neuro-Rehabilitation Ward, assessment and follow-up includes out-patient services and home visits. Group therapy sessions and home visits and out-patient service following referrals is offered to the Hospice Movement.

DEPARTMENT FOR THE ELDERLY AND COMMUNITY CARE

Overview

During 2009, the Department for the Elderly and Community Care had the following responsibilities:

- providing domiciliary services to enable elderly persons to remain living in familiar surroundings within the community;
- setting up and running of day centres in various localities to enable elderly persons to continue leading an active life in the community;
- providing rehabilitation services and the best possible conditions for health improvement in geriatric institutions;
- providing institutional residence to elderly persons who are unable to benefit from any of the foregoing services.
- providing modern facilities and services to elderly persons, which help them remain independent; and
- provision of ongoing training to both existing staff and training directed to fill in gaps in current human resources.

The total budget allocation for 2009 was €2,100,000 for capital expenditure and €48,281,000 for the recurrent expenditure. In addition to the 932 staff at SVPR, the Department for the Elderly and Community Care has a staff complement of 293 employees and 663 part-time social assistants.

RESIDENTIAL SERVICES

St Vincent De Paule Residence (SVPR)

The main aim of the residence remained, during the year under review, that of giving elderly people who are no longer able to live in the community, a better way of living in an attractive, comfortable and modern environment. During 2009 much was done to attain this goal and have the residents' position ameliorated.

The fact that the Maltese Islands are facing an ageing population is being reflected in the demand for admission to St Vincent de Paule Residence. An Admission Board vets applications and each application is treated on its own merits giving special attention to the social and medical conditions of the individual.

An effort is being made to consolidate the mission, vision and objectives of SVPR, within the Department for the Elderly and Community Care. All respective sections and wards are to be consulted during the process. On one hand the Hospital Management Committee identified SVPR's motto, that is *Keeping residents at the heart of our services* – which will further focus the Residence's services, by keeping the residents in the middle of the decision process. On the other hand, the motto is to inspire SVPR's employees in an in-house competition that will establish the SVPR logo, which is intended to give an additional identity to the organisation.

At the end of 2009, the total population at St Vincent de Paule stood at 1,012 (299 Male and 701 Female).

Admissions		
<i>Admitted from</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
Community	28	49
Homes	7	18
Respite	46	89
MDH	6	10
ZCH	16	26
MCH	1	1
St Jeanne Antide	0	1
SPBH	2	1
Admission From Respite	6	8
KGH	47	64
Total	159	267

Discharges		
Respite Discharge	46	87
SVPR Discharge	7	6
Deaths		
Died receiving care at MDH	3	6
Died at SVPR	107	146
Died at Respite (SVPR)	0	0
Total	163	245

1,011 seasonal Influenza vaccines were given to SVP residents and 740 were given to residents at governmental homes. 822 influenza vaccines and 103 Hepatitis B vaccines were also given to staff at SVPR, staff working at Elderly Homes and in the community with the elderly.

A total of 216 patients, of whom 67 were new cases, were referred for Domiciliary Physiotherapy Services, resulting in 243 interventions. 48 governmental and 13 NGO day centre were visited, giving group physiotherapy services to a total of 1,061 participants. A total of 281 were newly referred as out-patient services, 615 patients were seen resulting in 2044 interventions.

The Occupational Therapy Department offered 2,338 treatment sessions to SVPR residents, 311 sessions on an out-patients basis, 15 sessions domiciliary services, 2,338 with residents at SVPR, 219 Jeanne Antide Ward, 106 Santa Bernardetta, 157 San Ġorġ Preca Ward and 129 sessions for persons with dementia. The Podogeriatric Unit offered a total of 6,570 services.

Various indoor and outdoor activities were organised by the Entertainment Section during 2009. These included a variety of welfare parties, 100th birthday parties, religious outings, BBQs, and others.

By the end of the year, 257 applicants had applied for admission to respite care at SVPR, of which 138 ended up utilising the respite service, which amounts to 54%. 119 applicants ended up not utilising the service for the following reasons:

- 14 did not do so as the dates requested were fully booked;
- 11 applicants applied for convalescence/rehabilitation;
- 12 were admitted to long-term care;
- 7 requested permanent admission only;
- 7 were in hospital or awaiting acute care;
- 5 were under 60 years of age;
- 3 applicants died prior to admission;
- 60 cancelled their application (26 of whom did so after being given a booking).

During 2009 the maintenance section concluded around 5,000 job sheets, these being either maintenance, repair or construction, of which some of the biggest projects are: commissioning of equipment at John Paul II and handing over; maintenance and certification of all lifts at SVPR complex; changing a large area of waterproofing membrane and closing penetrations, plastering and painting of several wards; preparation of tender and publication for removal and install of new Air to Air chiller in 22 St Joseph and Admission Ward; refurbishing of bathrooms; cleaning of all culverts; painting of bed tables, tables, chairs and 50 clinical chairs; plastering and painting of main and side corridors; manufacturing 10 wardrobes and 5 kitchen cupboards in Ruzar Briffa 1; extensive refurbishment at Ruzar Briffa 3.

Initiatives carried out by the Infection Control during 2009 included ward assessments and documentation; vaccination programme for Hepatitis B for staff in Elderly Homes; organisation for the third consecutive year a full day activity to increase awareness on hand hygiene and infection control measures at SVPR which included a conference and a shield presentation to the most compliant ward; hand hygiene enforcement and audits were carried out; distribution of Triclospet for usage in treatment of MRSA and two rooms were identified to be used in case of Swine flu influenza amongst residents.

COMMUNITY HOMES FOR THE ELDERLY

Performance Review and Analysis

At the end of 2009, there were 751 residents in Community Homes for the Elderly.

Bed Status in Government Homes for the Elderly					
<i>Home</i>	<i>Males -60</i>	<i>Females -60</i>	<i>Males +60</i>	<i>Females +60</i>	<i>Total</i>
Cospicua	2	2	28	97	129
Floriana	0	0	12	33	45
Gzira	0	0	4	25	29
Mellieħa	5	2	37	86	130
Mosta	3	0	20	45	68
Msida	0	0	13	51	64
Mtarfa	1	3	33	84	121
Żejtun	1	1	21	142	165
Total	12	8	168	563	751

During 2009, the Department maintained its agreements with private entrepreneurs for the provision of 204 beds for government-referred residents in private home settings within Casa Arkati at Mosta, Villa Messina at Rabat, Casa Serena at St Paul's Bay and Central Home at Mosta.

It has long been felt that the government community homes be gradually transformed into nursing homes which can start catering for the needs of dependent persons. In November 2009, a Manager Nursing Services commenced duties with overall responsibility for nursing and caring services within all government elderly homes as well as the Outreach Services which are intended to be piloted at the Msida area during first quarter 2010.

The Community Homes Advisory Committee (CHAC) evaluates the structure and processes that are related to holistic care in state community homes. The objective of the CHAC is to promote good care practices and improve outcomes. As a first pilot project, the team will address the issue of Falls Management in its preventive, care and documentation spheres. A study on current Falls Management Practices was carried out in all eight government residential homes between February and April 2009. The reasons for this exercise was to gain a clear picture of what is current practice regarding falls prevention, falls care and documentation, to assess educational and environmental problems related to falls and to audit care practices in homes. Following the results of this study, Falls Management Guidelines were set up and were divided into three phases to be introduced in three successive timeframes: an Environmental Appraisal of Falls Risk in Government Residential Homes; Identification of Residents at Increased Risk of Falls and their subsequent management; and Post-Fall care and documentation. The first phase was piloted at Msida Home and, after subsequent analysis, was launched for implementation in all government homes during a Falls Management Seminar (December 2009), for which all Home Managers and Senior Home Nurses attended. This was accompanied by an educational package that will assist the dissemination of falls educational knowledge to staff members in all homes. It is the intention to commence both the educational initiative and the environmental falls hazard assessment early in 2010. These initiatives will both be eventually audited prior to implementation of phase 2 and 3 of the Falls Management Guidelines.

Additional CHAC duties include the evaluation of residents who are referred for care management assessment by the Managers of Żejtun and Bormla Homes, as well as of those residents who are residing in private homes under the public-private partnership schemes. Furthermore, the CHAC is requested to advise the Department during the planning stage as well as during the ongoing refurbishment period in connection with any projected refurbishment in the homes. Such inter-disciplinary support and advice was already initiated in the proposed Msida Home extension. Moreover the CHAC is being regularly asked to do relocation assessment of residents in government homes and residents under public-partnership

schemes, particularly in situations when such residents have functionally and medically deteriorated to the extent that they required higher levels of care in alternative care settings.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

There are 16 Day Centres in Malta, all opening on a 5-day week basis, except for Safi Day Centre, which opens once a week. There were 17,021 attendances at day centres, subdivided as follows:

Centre	
Żejtun	1,082
Hamrun	1,665
Dingli	720
Qormi	1,264
Sliema	806
Żurrieq	820 (till October)
Mtarfa	1,415
B'Kara	1,536
Bormla	1,032
Luqa	582
St Paul's Bay	1,440
B'Buġa	810
Mosta	1,020
St Venera	987
Naxxar	965
Safi	607

Day centres organise a balanced programme consisting of physical, cultural, creative and social activities, which include dancing, singing, theatres, poem writing, guitar lessons and a sports day. The aim of these activities is to keep elderly members motivated, happy and feeling confident. Physiotherapy, podology and occupational therapy services are all carried out at the day centres.

The aim of these services is to encourage elderly persons to continue to live in the community by doing activities of daily living in order to prevent them from being admitted to a residential home.

The calls handled by the Telecare Centre in 2009 were as follows:

Month	No of Calls in 2008	No of Calls in 2009	Remarks
January	15,767	13,993	A decrease of 11.25%
February	12,600	12,696	An increase of 0.76%
March	11,521	12,828	An increase of 11.34%
April	11,110	11,227	An increase of 1.05%
May	9,614	10,831	An increase of 12.66%
June	9,422	13,789	An increase of 46.36%
July	9,473	10,124	An increase of 6.87%
August	8,919	9,611	An increase of 7.76%
September	9,594	10,728	An increase of 11.82%
October	11,457	11,922	An increase of 4.06%
November	11,998	12,742	An increase of 6.20%
December	12,240	12,562	An increase of 2.63%

The average number of new applications is around 2-4 daily. By the end of December 2009, there were 9,203 installations, of which 167 were Carelink installations.

Telecare Centre operates in conjunction with Telecare Service and Carelink Service. During the year, Go plc stopped issuing new Carelink Service to clients. In 2009, the Department embarked on an exercise to update its records about Telecare Centre clients. The Telecare Operators sent out 3,443 update forms.

During 2009, there were 207 new applications for the Incontinence Service (Scheme A), while 94 others stopped the service. This means that at the end of 2009, there were 896 persons making use of this service. 725 new applicants were registered in the Incontinence Service (Scheme B), while 695 stopped the service. This means that a total of 2,421 were benefiting from the Scheme B service up to the end of 2009. During the year, the Handyman section received a total of 1,512 new applications. 1,769 jobs were completed and 190 were cancelled (figure includes pending jobs from 2008). The most requested jobs were: plumbing (878) electrical works (467) and carpentry (513).

In 2009, the Electoral Office processed 9,452 cards for new Kartanzjan holders [(60+) and (75+)]. During the same year, 2,643 lost cards were passed on to the same office for renewal. The total number of beneficiaries of *Kartanzjan* stood at 94,874.

The main aim of the Social Work Unit is to provide help in the form of support, counselling and guidance. The work of the Unit is to assess requests from elderly clients in need of 'Home-Help', 'Admission to Homes', 'Admission to SVPR', 'Carer's Pension', 'Alternative Housing', 'Telecare Cases', and 'Court Cases'. It also discusses all cases referred for admission to Long Term Care. Up to the end of 2009, there were 1,827 requests for these services.

The principal aim of Home Help Service is to enable elderly people and people with disability and special needs to live as independently as possible and to encourage them to better their quality of life. It is meant to complement, not replace, family support or community services which might presently be rendered. Allocation of service is granted on the basis of social needs and/or medical problems and limitations. Up to the end of 2009, there were 2,609 households which benefited from the service with a total of 3,476 of beneficiaries. During 2009, 593 new cases were presented.

By the end of the year, the number of elderly persons benefiting from telephone rebates stood at 5,193. There were 443 new applications and 316 cancellations.

During 2009, the meal-on-wheels service provided 76,607 meals, an increase of 10,738 over the previous year.

REHABILITATION SERVICES (ZAMMIT CLAPP/KAREN GRECH HOSPITALS)

The Year in Review

The main items on the agenda were:

- maintenance of optimal service delivery in Zammit Clapp Hospital (ZCH) and Karen Grech Hospital (KGH);
- migration of services from ZCH to KGH in order to establish all the rehabilitation services at KGH, away from the multiple site service provision scenario. The work done in 2009 should enable the consolidation of all services at KGH by the early part of 2010;
- refurbishment project plans are well advanced. During 2009, KGH wards namely those in level 1 and 2 were refurbished. The refurbishment project for KGH will be completed in 2010;
- transfer of Transitional Ward patients to new wards in Mount Carmel Hospital in December 2009;
- appointment of a new hospital management committee;
- appointment of a Financial Controller and initiation of financial auditing of the various cost centres and their related expenditures;
- implementation of new control systems that enabled savings in the budgeted expenditure from €11million to €10,045,000. These cost containment efforts will continue in 2010 as more changes and control systems are implemented through the management structure.

The Medical Services provided by the two hospitals are:

- ZCH – three geriatric wards comprising of 60 rehabilitation beds as well as a Day Hospital supported by physiotherapy and occupational therapy services as well as clinical and dispensing pharmacy services.
- KGH – five wards, each holding 31 beds: three rehabilitation wards (two geriatric and one non-geriatric) comprising 93 beds, and two transitional care wards holding 62 long-term care beds (vacant at end 2009 and will host ZCH patients during migration in early 2010), together with physiotherapy and occupational therapy services and clinical and dispensing pharmacy services.

Performance Review and Analysis

A total of 1,315 patients were admitted in ZCH and KGH. The average age of in-patients was 79.7 years and the mean length of stay was 34.9 days. 74% of all admissions were from MDH. There were 1,306 discharges, of which 46.1% of the patients were discharged to their own home or carer's residence and 18.1% were to other community settings (not their own home), that is, a private, church or government home. 12.5% patients passed away. 17.8% were discharged to a long-term care bed.

Discharge Destination	Combined ZCH & KGH 2009	Change %
Own Home	602	46.1
Died	163	12.5
Transfer to Transitional Wards	128	9.8
SVPR & SJA	105	8
PPP Homes	85	6.5
Government Homes	44	3.4
Private Homes	58	4.4
Church Homes	49	3.8
Readmissions to Mater Dei Hospital	61	4.7
Other Hospitals	11	0.8
Total	1,306	100%

The greatest challenge for 2009 was again due to inadequate patient flow through the system, causing delayed discharges to long-term care beds, which is the main reason for the resulting decreased turnover. Out of the 413 long-term care patients identified in 2009, 67 were still at ZCH and KGH by the year end, compared to 40 at beginning of year.

1,849 consultation requests from MDH were dealt with during the year, the majority from the Department of Medicine (1,145), Department of Orthopaedics (415) and Department of Surgery (247).

Day Hospital operations continued as per previous years at ZCH. In all, 724 new community referrals were dealt with and 1,956 medical follow-up visits recorded, which included patients discharged from the wards.

Occupational Therapy (OT) services were provided at ZCH wards and the day hospital as well as on the wards at KGH and in the out-patients department at SLH. Services included individual assessments and interventions, equipment recommendations and processing of applications, group therapy sessions, ADL training, carer education, a 10-week memory programme, family training sessions, team home visits, and work site visits. The OT department continued to provide the home visit service, whereby therapists provide continued support in the community following discharge, as well as the outlet service which offers patients and their carers the possibility of purchasing personal and home equipment directly from the hospital or have larger equipment delivered to their home. A total number of 6,223 sessions were provided at the day hospital to 561 patients and 4,250 sessions were provided at the out-patients to 312 patients. In-patient services provided at ZCH included a total of 13,970 sessions to 691 patients and at KGH 16,030 sessions to 1,068 patients.

The OT staff attended and organised various training seminars. Four OT teams were set up to develop new OT services planned for the rehabilitation hospital at KGH, including Work Rehabilitation, Sensory Integration for Adults, Wheelchair and Seating Clinic and Day Hospital Programmes. Discussions were

held to set up and develop neuro-rehabilitation services at KGH and recommendations were made for dementia-friendly ward environments.

1,558 Patients received Social Work Services through In-Patients, Day Hospital, Out-Patients and SW Community Support Line. 80.5% of the patients received Full Social Work Service Packages whilst 19.5% of the patients received Basic Social Work Service Packages.

A total of 580 reports were prepared for the Admissions Board of SVPR and Community Homes for the Elderly in respect of long-term care patients. Social Workers are now also working with adult patients below the age of 60 years. The process for the recruitment of one full-time and two part-time social workers was completed.

The Social Work Services organised training for its staff. The need for the engagement of sufficient social work staff is felt in order to deliver a quality service and for the continuous evaluation and renewal work practices and development of future practice to fulfil today's needs. The expansion of the current community services is also necessary to provide a more holistic service.

Physiotherapy services were provided to all referred in-patients at ZCH and KGH and for follow-up care after discharge, in line with goals set on initial assessment and ongoing evaluation in collaboration with the inter-professional team. 1,315 new admissions received a total of 49,609 treatment sessions during the year under review. An on-call service was also available after normal hours of duty on a daily basis. Physiotherapy services were provided at the day hospital at Zammit Clapp to 619 new patients referred from weekly clinics and those referred for follow-up on discharge from wards at both hospitals. These patients received a total of 4,907 treatment sessions. Throughout the year various courses, conferences seminars, workshops and lectures were organised for Physiotherapy staff.

The total number of new referrals to the Speech and Language (SLP) Unit was that of 483 clients. 438 patients were discharged from SLP services at ZCH/KGH and 31 persons were referred to SLP services in the community for follow-up intervention.

The focus was on the consolidation of existing services offered to patients, promotion of increased uniformity in intervention and enhancement in the delivery of intensive intervention where necessary. In fact, liaison with SLPs based at MDH, community clinics and at other hospitals and homes was promoted in 2009.

A number of objectives were achieved in 2009, including the finalisation of M-SLaST, a speech language screening test. The SLP Unit delivered training sessions and lectures to the SLPs throughout the year. The SLPs participated in various events and organised the delivery of Dementia classes and training workshops to other health care professionals. The Aphasia special interest group was also established following work in different special interest groups in the areas of dysphagia and AAC.

The objectives set for the current year by the Pharmacy Services have been mostly reached and the ones listed have been very successful.

- To consolidate the professional pharmacy practices and the management of the services at ZCH and establish the same standards at KGH.
- To train all new staff members recruited by ZCH/KGH with the Pharmacy Services in 2009.
- To ensure continuing education for the Pharmacy staff.
- To continue to provide training opportunities for Pharmacy students.
- To continue delivering quality pharmacy services to ZCH/KGH.

The total expenditure on pharmaceuticals and medical devices for 2009 was €506,641, an 11% decrease when compared to the €566,894 in 2008. Around 101,000 items were issued by the pharmacy for a total cost of €502,599. The department provided clinical staff with regular reports on expenditure and medical management issues.

The in-patient pharmacy service at ZCH/KGH was delivered through two-pronged practices namely:

- *Ward pharmacy practice*, which provides pharmaceuticals to all wards at ZCH/KGH and an individualised system of ward dispensing. Daily inspections of the emergency drug drawers were carried out whilst the expiry date of all drugs on the wards was checked monthly. The individualised patient drug treatments on all ward drug administration trolleys were cross-checked weekly with the corresponding ward prescription record sheets and subsequently topped up. 10,932 checks were done by the end of the year.
- *Clinical pharmacy practice*. The pharmacy continued to deliver the clinical pharmacy service at ZCH/KGH. Pharmacists were allocated to wards. Patient medication records were kept and used to prepare a pharmaceutical care plan for every patient. Identified requirements for optimising drug therapy were discussed with the doctor and the patients' progress was subsequently monitored. A total of 1,315 patients had their treatment checked and reviewed on admission. Pharmacists joined the other members of the inter-disciplinary team on the weekly ward rounds/conferences and updated them on drug related issues.

Counselling sessions were held on the wards with 1,024 patients and/or their carers on discharge, to whom 186 green prescriptions were dispensed. Each was given a discharge pack consisting of a 7-day supply of medications and an individualised medication information sheet. A total of 713 applications for non-formulary items were filled in according to protocol.

Pharmacist intervention on Day Hospital was again restricted to patients who were referred with problems related to their medication and to participation in the inter-disciplinary Parkinson's disease programme for patients and their carers. A week's supply of drugs newly prescribed at Day Hospital was dispensed to patients. Patients on anticoagulant therapy, being followed up on Day Hospital, were also given their supply of Warfarin from the pharmacy.

The Pharmacy Department continued to function within specialised teams with the aim of improving the quality of care practices. These teams include the Infection Control team, the Wound Management Team, the Nutrition Committee and the Continence Care Team.

Education and training kept a high profile within the pharmacy department, which recognises the benefits of having appropriately qualified and competent staff that are committed to continuing professional and personal development. Reflective practice meetings were held to encourage staff to analyse their methods of intervention and find ways of improving their input. Weekly sessions whereby pharmacists took turns to present cases for discussion were organised. Teaching, seminars and training is an ongoing process in the Pharmacy department. Some of the staff are following post-graduate courses and Masters degrees.

A total of 2,776 patients were seen at the Orthotics and Prosthetics Unit during 2009. 1,130 of these were new patients and 1,646 were follow-ups.

The year 2009 has been a year of consolidation for Rehabilitation Physiotherapy Out-patients as both administrative and clinical operations have been integrated within ZCH/KGH Rehabilitation Hospital. The unit was involved actively both in finalising the medical brief for the New Rehabilitation Hospital and in defining the vision for the Rehabilitation Service at KGH, while being at the forefront of Physiotherapy Services developments in rehabilitation and disability management.

The total number of new referrals to combined Amputee, Neuro and General Rehabilitation Out-patients for 2009 was 705 new patients. This shows an increase of 18% over 2008. A total number of 7,886 treatment sessions were instituted, 16% more than in 2008. 118 domiciliary visits were performed compared to 90 visits the previous year. Most of these visits were planned together with other health professionals, in line with developing a comprehensive outreach service. The average waiting time for first appointment was of five days.

DEPARTMENT OF PRIMARY HEALTH

Objective

The Primary Health Department strives to provide primary health services with an emphasis on disease prevention and health promotion, while assuring the best possible treatment, care and support.

The Year in Review

Clinical Services offered in Primary Health Department are the following:

- General medical practitioner (clinic and home visits)
- General Nursing care
- Specialised services: (Medical Consultant clinic, Schedule V clinic, ECG clinic, Gynaecology and Antenatal clinic, Well Baby clinic, Diabetes clinic, Dental surgery and dental hygiene, Radiography services, Mental Health clinics, Optometry and Glaucoma clinics, Pathology investigations, Podology clinic, Physiotherapy clinic, Speech Language Pathology clinic, Occupational Health Unit, Community Pharmacies, Migrant Health Unit, National Immunisation Service, School Health Services).

Performance Review and Analysis

2009 was another year of strong activity in the Primary Health Department with 1,086,010 patient encounters. The Department still operated within the eight health centres and the number of peripheral clinics. New peripheral clinics were opened in Mtarfa and Pembroke.

The services offered by General Practitioners are as follows:

Service	2008	2009	% variation 08/09
GP episodes seen in Health Centres	262,373	331,751	+26%
Prescription Clinic by appointment	36,248	60,339	+66%
GP episodes in District Clinics	155,187	202,609	+31%
GP Home Visits by day	10,478	11,166	+7%
GP Home Visits by night	1,794	2,229	+24%
Total GP encounters	468,088	610,103	+30%

A total of 5,438 attended for Schedule V issues or renewals and 6,673 attended the Medical Consultant Clinic. 1,892 new cases and 2,775 follow-up cases were screened for glaucoma at the health centres. Attendances to other specialty services include:

Service	2008	2009	% variation 08/09
Diabetes Clinic	12,782	13,089	+2%
Obs/Gynae Clinic	7,118	9,199	+29%
Ophthalmic Clinic	4,481	4,574	+2%
Mental Health Clinic	3,972	2,801	-29%
Dental Clinic	27,376	24,548	-10%*
Well Baby Clinic	6,733	6,680	-1%
Acupuncture	441	0	-100%**
Total	64,911	62,900	-3%

* only services provided by Dental Surgeons are included. Services decreased due to industrial action

** service transferred to MDH

Other allied professional services were offered, included the following:

Service	2008	2008	% variation 08/09
Nursing Care (treatment rooms)	174,899	190,216	+9%
Podology	48,779	50,910	+4%
Speech Therapy*	20,519	22,196	+8%
Radiology	6,958	11,645	+67%

Pathology	60,819	67,637	+11%
Physiotherapy	27,950	27,420	+4%
Dental Hygienist	5,637	5,564	-1%
ECCG	3,802	3,728	-2%
Total	345,161	381,324	+10%

In March 2009, results from the Bone Density Unit started to be given directly to the patients, the patient having an option of either visiting the GP in the community or making an appointment with the Gynae clinic. Most of the clients opted to wait for an appointment at the Gynae clinic, even if the appointment took some months. To meet this increased load, extra sessions were held in the afternoon.

During the year, the Primary Health Department intensified its efforts to ameliorate the quality of the Immediate Medical Care delivered in the health centres. These efforts were concentrated mainly in two areas: training and equipment. An Immediate Medical Care Committee was set up in October 2009 with an interdisciplinary approach. The committee is made up of representatives from the medical, nursing and pharmacist professions.

Amongst other projects, in 2009 the Migrant Health Unit continued to challenge the issues associated with language and cultural barriers and access to health care for migrants. The main functions carried out throughout the year were:

- assisting migrants in accessing health care within the Maltese Health Care system
- coordination and implementation of a training programme for Cultural Mediators in Health Care
- train health professionals in Cultural and Diversity Issues in Health Care (Primary Health nurses and university students)
- carrying out health education sessions to migrants
- needs assessment of language barriers at Mater Dei Hospital
- capacity-building among migrant women
- liaising with other stakeholders working with migrants on health issues
- provision of translated health information.

In 2009, the School Health Service continued to provide a monitoring and surveillance programme within the mainstream public and church primary schools, as well as in the four special schools. The emphasis was on the early detection of physical, social, psychological and learning difficulties and disabilities as well as health promotion and health education.

During 2009, the services given by the School Health Unit were as follows:

Service	Children	Service	Children
Medical Examinations	3,566	ENT referrals	2
Measurements of Height and weight	7,804	Speech/Language Pathology referrals	285
Developmental Assessments	4,072	CDAU/Child Guidance referrals	66
Visual Acuity testing	9,384	Education Psychologist referrals	8
Injuries at school	107	Surgical referrals	1
Scoliosis Screening	2,377	Paediatric referrals	6
Ophthalmic referrals	433	Orthopaedic referrals (inc. scoliosis)	93
Dental Referrals	51		

Number of vaccines given in schools	
Immunisations	Children
Hep B 1 st dose	1,005
Hep B 2 nd dose	933
Hep B 3 rd dose	1,800 (previous year's cohort)
MMR	4,900 (2 cohorts)
BCG (State Schools)	2,545

Child Immunisation Schedule		
Age	Vaccine	Remarks
At 6–8 weeks of age	Dip/Tet/Per, Polio, Hib	
At 3 months of age	Dip/Tet/Per, Polio, Hib	
At 4 months of Age	Dip/Tet/Per, Polio, Hib	
At 15 months of age	MMR	
	Hepatitis B 1st dose	
At 16 months of age	Hepatitis B 2nd dose	
At 21 months of age	Hepatitis B 3rd dose	
During the 4th year	Dip/Tet, Polio	3 years after the 3rd dose of basic course
At 7 years	MMR	to all children
At 8 years	Hep B	to all children
At 12-14years	BCG	to all children
Booster at 16 years	Dip/Tet, Polio	5 doses of tetanus vaccine offer a lifelong protection. No further doses are necessary unless specifically indicated. To continue with diph. (Adult dose) and polio every 10yrs

The seasonal influenza vaccine for 2009 started to be administered in October. The uptake for this vaccine was relatively high and 90,000 individual doses had been administered up to the end of December 2009.

The following activities continued to be carried out during 2009:

- Hepatitis B, Diphtheria, Tetanus and typhoid vaccinations for WasteServ personnel, Green Skips workers, Beach Cleaners and others;
- Diphtheria, Tetanus and Typhoid vaccinations for drainage workers, Public Work Employees and Water Services Corporation employees;
- Tuberculin testing/scar examinations and Hepatitis B for Health Department employees;
- Vaccinations for foreign students;
- Vaccinations for Hepatitis B contacts, IV drug users, patients with blood hepatic and renal diseases;
- Vaccinations of Diphtheria, Tetanus and Polio to all Irregular Immigrants, and to their children according their age;
- Development of the e-health program to replace the old immunisation record database;
- Data input of the accumulated records that could not be logged at source due to technical problems associated with the above-mentioned program.

During the year, the Occupational Health Unit continued to serve its four-fold function:

- periodical checks for specific occupation health hazards (Cat 1);
- certification of fitness prior to employment/appointment/transfers/apprenticeships etc, (Cat 11);
- certification regarding specific cases (e.g. 'fitness to drive') (Cat 111);
- sundry requests for reports (including 'Ergonomic' review cases and Colour Vision Testing as well as assessment and advise regarding Registered Disabled Person Candidates (Category IV).

The total budget allocated to Primary Health during 2009 was €18,146,000.

The GP Training Coordinators' work in 2009 has been focused on the consolidation of improvements obtained, the exploration of new areas for development and preparation for the first exit examination. Seven new GP trainees started their specialisation in Family Medicine, bringing the total number of GP trainees to thirty. The first cohort of trainees will have their exit exam in July 2010.

During the year, 1,254 complaints were received by the Customer Care section. All cases were investigated - 1,073 cases (85.57%) were found to be justified and corrective action was taken, 113 cases (9%) were found to be completely unjustified, while in 68 cases (5.42%) the benefit of the doubt was given to the complainant although it was not clear whether the complaint was justified. In order to limit the number of complaints, necessary action, including disciplinary action, was taken. The following table gives

a breakdown of the nature of the complaints received. The increased number of complaints regarding undelivered services (625 more complaints in 2009 compared to 2008) was related to the industrial action.

Nature of Complaint	2008	% of complaints	2009	% complaints
Attitude of Employee	50	7.12%	33	2.63%
Appointment Failure	63	8.97%	78	6.22%
Prolonged waiting time	175	25%	134	10.68%
Undelivered service	375	53.4%	1,000	79.7%
Mistakes by employee	24	3.42%	6	0.47%
Others	15	2.14%	3	0.24%
Total	702		1,254	

The Commcare Department was officially relocated to the DECC in March 2009.

The Dental Section of the Primary Health Department coordinates the community dental service which consists of seven dental clinics in health centres, Floriana Dental Care Centre and the School Dental Service. The department provides a comprehensive primary dental health care service to the community consisting of educational talks to school children, teachers and parents; dental check-ups and treatment in the health centres. It is the policy of the department to emphasise dental health promotion and the prevention of dental disease. It also organises an Annual Dental Conference, which is open to all members of the Dental team.

Floriana	Qormi	Gżira	Paola	Cospicua	Mosta	B’Kara	Rabat	Total
5,414	1,693	3,511	3,770	1,347	3,988	2,782	1,877	24,382

A total of 5,566 patients were seen for scaling and polishing procedures in the health centres during 2009, 2.4% less than 2008.

The year under review was a busy year for the Infection Control because of the declaration of the H1N1 Influenza Pandemic. The contingency plans for Primary Health had already been done but as the disease reached Malta, the plans were adjusted accordingly. An audit was carried out to investigate the decontamination process of instruments in Podiatry and Dental services. Autoclaves were procured for all podiatry units and corrective action taken to improve the decontamination process, hence improving patient safety. An on-call service provides cover for occupational injuries and needles stick injuries. The Infection Control unit was also active in the supervision and monitoring of cleaning in all health facilities and was involved in the team checking on the Occupational health risks at the place of work in Primary Health.

The Human Resource section was reorganised and the following tasks were carried out:

- updating the already existing employee database and collect other essential information regarding the employees;
- collating of job descriptions of all staff working with this department;
- processing of applications submitted by the staff regarding special paid and unpaid leave, such as study leave and missionary/voluntary work. During the year, several employees were granted study leave in connection with training courses, lectures and conferences both locally and abroad and for the preparation of examinations. The Department also granted approvals for requests that fall under family friendly measures such as telework and reduced hours working system, which enabled employees to find a balance between work and family;
- collating a monthly report with breakdown of activity as regards human resource activity.

PHARMACY OF YOUR CHOICE (POYC)

Overview

The main activities were:

- The Department's organisational structure to cater and support the introduction of a new delivery system which is based on a Just In Time/Top-Up approach was reviewed.
- Consolidation and strengthening of its operational processes was continued.
- POYC continued to regularly update the Internal Audit and Investigations Directorate (IAID) on progress within the Department. A post-audit visit was also conducted by the IAID in June 2009, wherein the marked improvements and achievements attained by the POYC were highly commented upon.
- Standard operating procedures were drafted to complement the Quality Manual to continue developing the Quality Management System.
- The POYC pharmacies were switched from a VPN system onto a web-based system, automatically allowing pharmacies to timely log into the POYC network/database system, allowing for a higher level of efficiency and effectiveness. All 68 pharmacies were registered with Government's eID Registration System by end 2009 to ensure a seamless and smooth transition of this switchover.
- A Handbook on HR procedures was compiled and is to be distributed to all POYC staff by beginning of 2010.
- Refurbishment was continued.
- A new automatic tablet counting machine for the Department's Re-packaging Area was purchased.
- Cross-checking and verification of documentation was continued to ensure that the patients are actually in possession of the necessary permits and prerequisites before benefitting from the pharmaceuticals that fall under the Yellow/Pink Card medical criteria.
- Towards the end of 2009, POYC launched its own website to improve Client-Care Service and promote the Department's image amongst the national key health services contributors. URL: www.poyc.gov.mt
- A new delivery system was launched which is based on a one-week Top-Up and Just In Time (JIT) approach. The aim is to curb wastage, ensure optimisation of stock rotation with the 68 pharmacies and guarantee an equitable distribution of the pharmaceutical stock available.
- POYC commissioned the National Statistics Organisation to conduct two separate quality satisfaction questionnaires, the main aim being to evaluate the quality of service rendered by the private pharmacies to the POYC beneficiaries, the service rendered to the private pharmacies by the POYC Department, the approach/attitude perceptions of the stakeholders towards each other, etc.

Performance Review and Analysis

The POYC Scheme is spread over 67 pharmacies in 27 different localities. To-date the total number of patients registered amount to 31,912, that is, an increase of 3,085 patients over the previous year. The scheme's roll-out roadmap together with the number of currently registered patients within each locality is highlighted hereunder:

Roll-out month	Locality	Pharmacies	Patients (end2009)
December 2007	Gharghur	2	535
	Mgarr	1	643
January 2008	Mellieha.	3	1,781
	Total	6	2,959
February	Naxxar	4	2,306
April	St Paul's Bay	2	1,048
	Qawra	3	953
	Bugibba	1	645
	Mosta	7	4,635
	Rabat	3	3,265
May	Dingli	1	803
	Bahrija	1	174
	Mtarfa	1	[re-opened] 103
	Total	23	13,932
May	Swieqi	2	764
	St Andrew's	2	551
	Tà Ġiorni	1	494
	Pembroke	2	460
	Paċeville	1	131
	Tà Xbiex	2	429
	Msida	4	2,003

June	St Julian's	3	889
	San Gwann	4	2,405
	Gzira	4	2,061
	Attard	4	1,757
July	Pieta'/G'Mangia	4	1,146
	Balzan	2	906
	Lija	2	808
	Fleur de Lys	1	217
	Total	38	15,021
	GRAND TOTAL	67	31,912

NATIONAL BREAST SCREENING CENTRE

The national Breast Screening Service was launched on 19 October 2009. The target cohort population is women in Malta and Gozo aged 50-60 years and these women will be screened over a three-year cycle. Current uptake rate is around 50% of invited women.

The capital project investment was €1.6 million and the annual recurrent expenditure is estimated to be approximately €0.6 million euro.

Several contractual agreements for service were set up including medical physics, radiology, operational maintenance for equipment and software support, and for cleaning services.

Training is a priority for the centre. Radiography staff were trained prior to the launch of the service and one radiologist was trained in the United Kingdom.

A custom-built screening software modality was installed, this enables the centre to build its demographic database, schedule appointments and clinics, generate invitations, recall and outcome letters, reports and other functionalities pertinent to the current and future operational needs of the centre. Other screening modalities can be introduced within this IT software system.

Performance Review and Analysis

The outcome of Initial Screening was as follows

Event	Number of Patients
Invites Sent	2,064
Attended	654
Did Not Attend	938
Mammogram in last 12 months	119
Declined screening	110
Insufficient Details	74
Requested Re-appointment	135
Unknown	34
Total	2,064

The outcome of the Recalls/Second Appointment was as follows:

Total Customers Recalled	59		
Procedures			
Back to Normal Screening	46	Stereo Biopsy	5
Ultrasound	45	Early Recall (After 1 year)	2
Paddle View	18	Technical Recall (Repeat)	2
Fine Needle Aspiration	4	Magnification (Referred to MDH)	2
Ultrasound Biopsy	10	Declined Recall	1
Outcome			
Malignant	7		

Seven malignant tumours were identified in the first two months of the screening programme.

NATIONAL BLOOD TRANSFUSION SERVICE

Overview

The year 2009 was characterised by a number of very important issues and events relating to the blood establishment.

- Work on the new premises.
- Procurement, installation and validation of Blood Irradiator; the tender was published and is expected to be fully operational by the end of 2010.
- Procurement of e-Progesa, the latest software version which will greatly improve the operational efficiency of the service. Work has started with the validation teams, and discussions with the supplier (MAC Systems) are ongoing. The full implementation of e-Progesa is expected to continue up to the year 2012
- Final preparations for the finalisation of the accounts and stock management IT system. The initial phase of using ACCESS to commence in the first quarter of 2010.
- Continue on the procurement of a document management system. This is expected to be procured in 2010.
- Finalising the setting up of an agency.
- Participation in two EU co-funded pan European projects, EUBIS - Blood Inspection and training scheme (which will be entering its final year and will be officially closed and launched as a training programme during the ISBT conference in 2010), and the DOMAIN project on blood donor management.
- The department is also fully active within the European Blood Alliance (EBA) and is chairing a working group on Education in Transfusion Medicine. In September 2010, the EBA Board meeting will be held in Malta.

Performance Review and Analysis

19,384 persons called at the various sites. From these, a total of 14,622 Whole Blood Donations were accepted. There were also 351 Single Donor Platelets procedures, a slight increase from 2008.

	2009	2008	Difference
Callers	19,384	20,310	-926 (-4.6%)
Donations Whole	14,622	14,810	-188 (-1.3%)
Single Donor Platelets	351	320	31 (+9.7%)

The Whole Blood Donations were as follows:

Whole Blood Donations	2009	2008	Difference
NBTC	9,911	10,158	-247 (-2.6%)
GGH	1,498	1,528	-30 (-2.0%)
Mobile Teams	3,213	3,124	89 (2.8%)
Total	14,622	14,810	-188 (-1.3%)

The increase in the Mobile Unit collection is due to the return of the Mobile Blood Donation Unit from refurbishment in January 2009. Regular Mobile Teams were stopped. Single Platelet Donation increased over last year.

There were 2,801 first time donations during 2009. From 14,622 whole blood donations, 11,514 (78.7%) were males and 4574 (31.3) were females. 3,213 whole blood donations were collected during drives.

80,619 screening tests were carried out on blood donations received. 29,363 serology examinations were also performed.

The processed blood products for 2009 included 14,159 Whole Blood, 860 Cryoprecipitate, 337 Single Donor Platelets, 790 Pooled Platelets, 7,303 Filtered FFP, and 6,856 Fresh Frozen Plasma.

Finance and Purchasing

The access dimensions implementation project was initiated in February 2009, a project leading to autonomy financial accounting. Procurement procedures for a Document Management System and the upgrading of PROGRESA were initiated. The tender for a Blood Irradiator has been prepared and published. The total purchases of medical consumables for 2009 amounted to €955,492.76.

GOVERNMENT HEALTH PROCUREMENT SERVICES

The Government Health Procurement Services (GHPS) is entrusted with the purchase, storage and distribution of over 10,000 pharmaceuticals and medical devices for the National Health Services. During 2009 these functions were carried out in line with current financial regulation and legislation, with the aim of providing timely, quality-approved and cost-effective service. Continuous efforts continued to be made to actively ameliorate the services provided (in collaboration with the various departments involved) in the provision of healthcare services under the National Health Services Scheme, in line with Goods Distribution Practices in terms of EU legislation.

The main activities of the National Formulary Management Unit (NFM) within the GHPS are:

- drafting, research, checking and updating of the specifications in liaison with the Directorate for Pharmaceutical Policy and Monitoring (DPPM) of medicinal products which are purchased by GHPS;
- cooperation with other units within the GHPS, namely the Contracts' Section, the Interface Section, the Procurement and Stores' Sections and the Responsible Person's Office (mainly with regard to the drafting of Standard Operating Procedures, batch recall issues and other problems);
- evaluation of all offers for medicines in anticipation of the ensuing recommendations for the procurement of the most cost effective and suitable product generated by the Purchasing Section;
- active participation on the GHPS Contracts Committee whereby final evaluation reports are discussed and representation on other committees such as the Blood Product Adjudication Committee (BPAC) where the national policy on blood-containing products is drafted;
- release of medicines - every medicine used within the Government Health Service passes through an evaluation procedure so as to ensure that all tender conditions and regulatory issues are abided with. In July, this process was taken over by the RP section;
- granting of necessary financial authorisations (not exceeding €1,750 - €2,500 in terms of established policy) for the procurement of medicinals and medical devices;
- close collaboration with other government health units, such as the Pharmacy Department MDH, the Medicines Authority, pharmacies and health centres and government hospitals;
- ongoing collaboration with DPPM especially in the maintenance of the National Formulary of Medicines, the introduction of new medicines, the deletion of obsolete medicines and for the procurement of particular medicines which are used for specific patients or in medically rare conditions.

378 pharmaceuticals were procured by GHPS and directly imported from different suppliers mainly from the UK. There were 1,299 instances wherein some of these pharmaceuticals were imported directly on more than one occasion.

The Responsible Person's Office (RPO) is responsible for regulatory affairs concerning the procurement, storage and distribution of medical products by GHPS, including licensing and quality assurance, in collaboration with the relevant authorities, clinical counterparts and suppliers. It also deals with quality alerts, complaints and recalls of pharmaceuticals and medical devices. During 2009, 175 applications for unlicensed drugs were processed and 120 quality alerts for drugs or medical devices were investigated, of which four resulted in a recall of product in question.

A major result achieved by this Section during 2009 was the acquisition of a wholesale dealer licence for GHPS. This was made possible following the actions and proposal drawn up in response to the deficiencies highlighted by the Medicines Authority inspectorate.

There are five key areas of operation and three areas of support activities that require the application of standards for quality management of procedures within GHPS. Quality control of pharmaceutical wholesale dealership activities is carried out through an approved set of standard operating procedures which have been revised to meet required standards (16 SOPs were issued or reviewed in 2009).

The function of the Contracts Section at GHPS involves various processes whereby contracts for the purchase of drugs, medical equipment (together with prosthetics and orthotics) and general items are issued, after requests for offers are made either through tender or through calls for quotations. Calls for tenders are issued either through Department of Contracts for items whose projected value is €47,000 and over, and through departmental tenders whenever the projected value is below €47,000. Both procedures are carried out following public calls for offers advertised in the Government Gazette and respective websites.

A further exercise was conducted to identify the number of calls for quotations initiated by the Government Health Procurement Services in 2009, and the number of offers (quotations) received in pursuance thereto. These are divided under drugs and equipment. Calls for quotations are published under two main areas: through Government Gazette, i.e. when calls are published in the Government Gazette, and on the GHPS website and through calls for the submission of proforma invoices (PFIs) from known suppliers.

Statistical information pursuant to calls for tender, quotations and proforma invoices processed during 2009	
Tenders issued via Contracts Department	207
GPS Departmental tenders	1,101
Government Gazette quotations	683
Proforma Invoices	2,548

Government Health Procurement Services: Letters of Acceptance Issued during 2009		
<i>Number Issued by Category</i>	Total number issued	717
	Drugs	295
	Equipment	417
	General	5
<i>Number Issued through</i>	Treasury (Contracts' Dept)	69
	Departmental	574
	D/O via tender	74
<i>Cost by Category</i>	Drugs	€19,522,883
	Equipment	€ 8,338,780
	General	€ 148,317
	Total Cost	€28,009,980*

Note: Total amount in euro currency includes various awards issued in foreign currencies

The Purchasing Section within the GHPS procures supplies of pharmaceuticals, medical devices and general supplies. The GHPS currently stores and distributes medical items including medicines, medical devices (disposable and non-disposable) and foods for special diets. Amongst the various GHPS clients are the six government hospitals, the Primary Health Care dispensaries and Medical Devices centres in health centres and other clinics. In addition GHPS stores also supply 118 CAPD patients eligible for home deliveries of voluminous renal fluids; and another seven patients with Total Parenteral Nutrition (TPNs).

Specific action continued to be taken during 2009 to maintain a general decrease in the maximum acceptable delivery period (in respect of effected deliveries by suppliers). This measure helped GHPS to reduce its stock-holding, hence making better use of available storage space and increasing the rate of stock turnover. This brought about a better financial budgetary management. In the procurement of particular drugs, however, the stock-holding level had to be kept at a particular level, as is the case with the Pandemic Influenza supplies.

During 2009, Government Health Procurement Services started the process of upgrading its Accounting and Auditing package from Sage Line 100 Version 5.2a (DOS) to Sage Pastel Evolution.

A current project undertaken by the Ministry is the centralisation of all stores in one location. It is expected that eventually the chosen location is to reach the necessary standards in terms of EU regulations.

The Finance Section within the GHPS consists of two units: the Accounts Payable Section and the Management Accounts Section. The Accounts Section handles all payments in terms of the General Financial Regulations to suppliers of Pharmaceutical and Surgical Materials and the Prosthetics and Orthotic Equipment. In the year under review, they handled the first stage of the processing of payments of the Special Vote for Pandemic Combating Initiative.

During 2009, the average amount of monthly payments was circa €6.4 million. As a result of additional funding in the revised estimates, the payments in November 2009 reached €10 million. In 2009, the Accounts Payable processed and paid the total of €77 million to local and overseas suppliers of medicines, surgical devices and prosthetic and orthotic service providers. This is the total monetary provision allocated to the GHPS for the Programmes and Initiatives Vote including additional funding given during the year and at the Revised Estimates 2009 stage. The Management Accounts is mainly involved in amending commitments in DAS before Accounts Payable proceeds with payment.

In conclusion, the 2009 statistics for GHPS show that:

- end of year creditors is €15 million, of which 94% are dated less than 150 days;
- there are €900,000 worth of invoices dated 150 days and over, an amount of which is in dispute with suppliers;
- the groundwork to achieve the credit terms for pharmaceutical purchase in 2010 from 150 days to 120 days has been installed and the re-engineering exercises undertaken.

DR JOHN M CACHIA
Director General (Health Care Services)

Health, Elderly and Community Care Strategy and Sustainability Division

INTRODUCTION

Functions and Objectives

The Strategy and Sustainability Division is responsible for research and analysis, policy development, coordination of strategy planning, and EU and international affairs. It is also responsible to develop proposals and give direction on the sustainability of health services including health care entitlement.

- To coordinate an ongoing process of consultation with stakeholders and promote user involvement.
- To gather, analyse and disseminate health information and carry out research.
- To develop policy, coordinate strategic planning and put forward proposals that contribute to the sustainability of public health and health care services.
- To monitor the implementation of policies, strategic plans, programmes, services and initiatives adopted by the Ministry.
- To coordinate and prepare reports identifying issues, problems, unmet needs and service gaps, and recommend initiatives, review of policies, and amendments to procedures and programmes as required.
- To develop pharmaceutical policies and procedures and carry out related audits.
- To coordinate and promote EU and international relations.

The Year in Review

During the year, the Strategy and Sustainability Division continued to assume overall responsibility for Policy Development and EU Affairs, as well as for Programme Implementation across the whole of the Ministry for Social Policy, reflecting the widened ministerial responsibilities.

The report for the Directorate of Policy Development and EU Affairs (Social Policy) features under the Social Policy section of the Ministry. With regard to Programme Implementation, this report features those aspects relevant to Health, the Elderly and Community Care.

The following were the main achievements for the Strategy and Sustainability Division during 2009:

- Streamlining of health care entitlement functions with development of a portfolio of healthcare interventions
- Review and streamlining of processes and procedures for entitlement to medicines
- Development of a legal framework and process for pricing and assessment of new medicines
- Elaboration of the national cancer strategy
- Technical support for the launch of the consultation process on the primary care reform
- Formulation of a process for the assessment and development of new services
- Analysis and publication of reports from the European Health Interview Survey 2008
- Strengthening of bilateral relations within the EU as well as with North African countries
- Increasing the research output of the Division most of which was presented during the Malta Medical School Conference

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR GENERAL

Health Care Portfolio

The health care portfolio incorporates the list of procedures and services that are provided by publicly funded health care providers. The portfolio is compliant with the World Health Organisation's International Classification of Diseases Version 9 with clinical modification (ICD-9-CM). A draft list was produced and individual meetings were held with each respective clinical chairperson and where relevant, other professionals. The list was modified according to the conclusions reached in the meetings. The list was finalised and will now be regularly updated as new services are included in the public health system.

Health Technology Assessment and Introduction of New Service Developments

With the constant developments in technology and advancements in medicine, requests for new service and technology developments are received. Introduction of new health technologies and services within our health care system is crucial to ensure that the latter keeps pace with these developments. As part of the processes being undertaken to enhance access, that is, the improvement of quality whilst safeguarding sustainability of our healthcare system in line with health service objectives, the need has been felt to streamline the introduction of new health technologies and services.

An application form for such requests was devised wherein the applicant is also asked about the possible impact of implementation of the requested service on other departments and whether such departments were consulted. The form is being used for every request made and is being completed satisfactorily. The information is being utilised to assess the clinical and financial impact of introductions of new services and technologies.

Medical and Assistive Aids

A Medical Aids Working Group (MAWG) was set up by the Director General Strategy and Sustainability to analyse the practices adopted at Mater Dei Hospital for the loaning of medical aids to patients and to put forward recommendations for an efficient, centralised, equitable and financially sustainable service.

The MAWG was chaired by the Consultant in Public Health and collected information from all the departments, especially the loans section, in order to have a clear understanding of current practice. It also obtained a list of items which are on loan, their cost price and the amount of deposit paid by the patient on borrowing such an item. The working group invited key stakeholders to attend meetings so that all the members of the group would get first-hand information on current practices.

The MAWG noted that the existing list of items on loan was not exhaustive and there existed items which were being loaned but did not feature on the list. Such items were added, while certain items, which were deemed either not relevant to today's needs or were very affordable (up to €20), were removed from the list. A proposal was made so that the deposit left by the patient for each particular item be revised in the light of the actual cost, the availability, return rate of such items, duration of loan and the presence of a waiting list for such an item. The MAWG took immediate action to link the database of the Loan's section with the mortality register, in order to expedite the retrieval items from patients who had passed away.

After thorough analysis of the procedures currently in place for the loaning of medical aids, the MAWG concluded that the title of these items should be 'medical and assistive aids', as some of the items are not medical. Furthermore it put forward a number of recommendations for improving the system and to lead to a more user-friendly, efficient and sustainable service. These recommendations will be implemented during 2010.

Public Health Programme

In 2009, the Ministry continued to participate in the EU Health Programme 2008-13. Although still composed of three pillars: Health information, Health threats, and Health determinants, the Ministry participated for the first time within a new financing mechanism - that of a 'Joint Action'. Joint actions are activities carried out by the Community and one or more Member States or by the Community and the competent authorities of other countries participating in the Programme together. The priority areas eligible for financing as joint actions are specified in the Work Plan for a particular year. Joint Actions are developed through an invitation to the authorities participating in the Health Programme and not via an open call for proposals such as for projects. Also, the Community contribution may only be awarded to a public body or a non-profit-making body designated through a transparent procedure by the Member State or the competent authority concerned and agreed by the Commission. The maximum contribution cannot exceed 50 percent, except in cases of exceptional utility where it can go up to 70 percent. Exceptional utility may occur when activities have a very significant European added value in the areas indicated in the work plan.

The National Focal Point for this programme attended a training workshop on improving proposals as well as a meeting for national focal points and another for the steering committee members.

HEALTH CARE ENTITLEMENT

The Year under Review

During 2009, the Strategy and Sustainability Division continued to work on different initiatives to ensure transparency and accountability. Initiatives were also undertaken to increase information and accessibility to services offered both internally and for the general public. These principles were also used to guide the administration of the EU Healthcare Entitlement Unit and National Programme of Referral for Highly Specialised Treatment, which fall directly under the responsibility of the Director General's office. Work continued on the consolidation and formalisation of the processes by which these two named sections work.

EU Healthcare Entitlement Unit

- Following a wide process of consultation, a policy document to clarify entitlement criteria for health services was drafted for consideration by higher authorities
- Reviews of business processes and accounting procedures continued with the aim of setting up a specialised management information system.
- The Division actively sought media opportunities to inform the public on the work carried out by the Unit and giving information on how the public can make better use of the services they offer. In 2009, the Unit participated in the AMITEX Travel Fair and officials from the Division took part in two television programmes. Work has started on the updating of all the webpages pertaining to the Unit on the Ministry's website.
- In view of the entry into force, in May 2010, of new EU Regulations regulating the work of the Entitlement Unit, the Division hosted a visit by a UK social security expert in order to brief the staff on these new regulations and operational requirements emanating from them. To this end, an internal review of operations is being carried out
- A new registration scheme for UK nationals residing in Malta who wish to obtain healthcare cover through the Reciprocal Health Agreement between Malta and the United Kingdom was launched. To gain access to healthcare through this bilateral, UK nationals residing in Malta need to register with the Entitlement Unit and they will be issued an ad hoc entitlement card. The aim of this scheme is to clarify the entitlement and to be able to better account for healthcare expenses incurred in the treatment of British citizens residing in Malta who are not covered by EU regulations on coordination of social security benefits.

Treatment Abroad Coordination Office

The Treatment Abroad Coordination Office within the Strategy and Sustainability Division worked on a number of different initiatives. These include:

- Revision of medical and nursing Escort Fees;
- Revision of contracts pertaining to accommodation provided by the Franciscan Sisters in London and Puttinu Cares Foundation in Sutton as well as services provided by the Franciscan Friars in London;
- Revision of Travel Funding Policy for Children travelling to UK for treatment;
- Finalisation of negotiations with Airmalta to revise airfares for patients and relatives authorised by the Treatment Abroad Committee to go for treatment in the UK;
- Introduction of an IT system to record all information pertaining to patients travelling abroad for treatment;
- A visit to some UK hospitals and Franciscan Sisters and Friar by the Coordinator Treatment Abroad was carried out in December, with the aim being to enhance communications and relations between Malta and the UK parties and to establish a better modus operandi;
- Discussions were carried out different specialities within MDH with the aim of identifying new services that can be introduced locally either through further training of local medical staff or through visiting consultants clinic. This initiative is aimed at reducing the need to refer patients to the UK for such treatments. A maxillo-facial surgeon was invited to carry out an assessment of local facilities and to discuss training needs in order to start offering maxillo-facial surgery at MDH as from 2010. Two new visiting consultants, one specialised in neurosurgery and one specialising in adult gastroenterology, were invited to hold clinics and surgical procedures at MDH;
- Streamlining of the referral process for submission of pathology investigations to reference laboratories overseas.

Health Care Entitlement – Operational Activities

EU Healthcare Entitlement Unit

The EU Healthcare Entitlement Unit was set up in 2005 to implement EU regulations on the coordination of health benefits between Member States. In 2009, the section processed 61,204 applications for the European Health Insurance card (EHIC) together with other related work for the implementation of EU regulations. This work includes the following:

E-Forms	Outbound (Issued)	Inbound (Registered)
E121	5	333
E109	3	7
E106	49	69

During 2009, the unit also evaluated 237 requests received by other EU Member States for reimbursement of expenses related to emergency medical treatment received in Malta. A total of 12 E126 forms were sent by the Entitlement Unit to other Member States, out of which 11 were approved for re-imburement by the Maltese Health Authorities. The section dealt with thousands of public queries through telephone calls, emails and post.

Visits Abroad

Meetings	No. of Meetings
Administrative Commission	5
Working Party of the Administrative Commission	1
Audit Board of the Administrative Commission	2
Joint Meeting of the Administrative Commission and Technical Commission	1

Patient Claims Section

		Claims received and issued in 2009	
E125¹		Claims Issued	
		€487,021.44	
		Claims Received	
		€265,846.80	
E127²		Claims Issued	
	2005		€80,154.28
	2006		€191,349.75
		Claims Received	
		€19,220.02	

¹ E125 – Form used to claim actual costs
² E127 – Form used to claim average costs

The total E125 claims issued for the period May 2004 to December 2009 stand at €1,832,641.95.

National Referral Programme for Highly Specialised Treatment

The Treatment Abroad Committee met on a monthly basis (12 times)

The office was also responsible for the logistics related to travel for the approved cases. During 2009, 296 patients (477 episodes) were sent for treatment abroad.

Visiting Consultants in Spinal Surgery, Paediatric Interventional Cardiology, Hand Surgery, Orthopaedic Surgery, Uro-Surgery, Paediatric Surgery, Pain Management, Ophthalmic Surgery, Interventional Radiologist and Neurosurgery were invited to perform operations/procedures at Mater Dei Hospital.

Visiting Consultants in Paediatric Respiratory Diseases, Paediatric Cardiology, Paediatric Nephrology, Paediatric Oncology, Paediatric Endocrinology, Paediatric Gastroenterology, Paediatric Neuro Muscular Diseases, Paediatric Neurology, Paediatric Neurosurgery, Haemato-Oncology, Respiratory Diseases, Retinoblastoma Ophthalmology and a Cochlear Implant specialist team were also invited to hold shared care clinics at Mater Dei Hospital during 2009.

Entitlement to Medical Aids

The following numbers of applications were approved to be supplied free of charge:

Dentures	1,162
Glasses	1,899
Breast Prostheses	388
Hearing aids and ear moulds	268

DIRECTORATE FOR POLICY DEVELOPMENT, EU AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS (HEALTH)

INTRODUCTION

The Directorate for Policy Development, EU Affairs and International Affairs for Health (DPDEU) is one of the directorates within the Strategy and Sustainability Division in the Ministry for Social Policy. The responsibilities of this Directorate include the drawing up of policies in the areas of public health, health care services and long-term care and the promotion of the sustainable development of the Maltese health sector in line with service users' and national needs and priorities. The Directorate is also responsible for the coordination of the formulation of the Ministry's position on policies proposed by the EU, and is the local and international link that explores and utilises opportunities arising from EU membership and bilateral/international relations. The Directorate is responsible for coordinating Malta's participation in EU

structures and processes through coordination with local stakeholders including EU Secretariat, other ministries and the Permanent Representation in Brussels.

This Directorate was involved in the preparation of submissions for projects to be funded by the EU Structural Funds for the period 2007-2013. It also continued to monitor the implementation of projects under the Transition Facility Fund and the European Social Fund (ESF 2004-2006). The responsibility of Senior Programming Officer was retained by the Director until these projects are completed.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The main functions pertaining to this directorate are the following:

- To develop and consolidate the policy development structures of the Ministry, identify key areas in line with general government policy for advancement and conduct this development ,employing international best practice and local evidence and reflecting appropriate consultations with stakeholders which includes user participation.
- To assist in the performance of assessments of economic and sustainability implications of proposed or existing policies and programmes and review of standards, regulation and service development initiatives.
- To proactively identify areas of key strategic importance for the Maltese health sector where the EU institutions are engaging in discussion and formulation of proposals and act as the focal point in preparing EU positions following consultation within the Ministry, with other ministries as relevant and with external stakeholders.
- To ensure that all obligations entered into by Government as a Member States of the EU are adhered to within the set time-frames.
- To promote the development of bilateral activities with other countries and seek opportunities for fostering greater collaboration and ensure compliance with bilateral and multilateral agreements and commitments.

THE YEAR UNDER REVIEW

Policy Development

Policy development takes places on an ongoing basis through the submission of reports, positions and questionnaires in response to requests from the European Commission. The Directorate is also involved in the promotion of the concept of ‘Health in all Policies’ through its work and collaboration in inter-sectoral activities and reviews. It is frequently consulted by other Ministries and entities to review their positions on various subjects in order to ascertain that health aspects are promoted and appropriately catered for.

Other specific areas of health policy development carried out by this directorate during 2009 include the following:

- Elaboration of a policy on the developments of cross border health care in Europe and coordination of a consolidated government response for the proposed Directive of the EU on the application of patients’ rights in cross-border healthcare. This proposed directive was extensively discussed during 2009 but it did not reach the intended political agreement in the Council of Ministers of December 2009.
- Monitoring and updating of health and long-term care aspects within the *National Strategy Report on Social Inclusion and Social Protection 2008-2010* and input as health representative on the Social Protection Committee. During 2009, this directorate monitored the implementation of the measures proposed in the report for 2008-2010 in the field of Health and long-term care. This Directorate was also responsible for the printing of the report for 2008-2010 and for the organisation of its public launch in April 2009.
- The finalisation of a draft national cancer control plan. This plan was submitted for a peer review by the Institute of Cancer in France. Positive feedback was received and the plan is to launch this plan early in 2010.
- Conducting preliminary research work and establishing important contacts and working relationships with a view to the development of a Migrant Health Policy for Malta. DPDEU also participated in a number of

events both locally and abroad dealing with this area of emerging importance at both the national and international levels.

- Conducting the drafting of a discussion document for a new National Health Strategy. This discussion document is aimed for dissemination as a basis for a wide consultation that needs to be undertaken prior to the establishment of a National Health Strategy for 2010-2015 and beyond.
- Conducting the drafting of a document that enlists the legal and regulatory basis for patients' rights within the Maltese healthcare sector. This document will be finalised and disseminated during 2010.
- The Directorate provided extensive support to the consultation process undertaken for the Primary Health Care Reform that was launched late in 2009.
- Assisting the Directorate for Policy Development Directorate for Social Affairs in the preparation of the national programme for the European Year 2010 for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion.
- Assisting in the design of policy proposals concerned with the streamlining of health care entitlement particularly for specific population groups.
- During this year, the Directorate accommodated five specialist trainees in Public Health Medicine. These trainees were involved in the duties concerned with Policy Development and also with EU and International Affairs.

EU Affairs Policy Coordination

The core tasks pertaining to the EU Affairs Directorate on a daily basis in the field of policy coordination are the following:

- Preparation of Explanatory Memoranda on EU pipeline legislation
- Drawing up of Instruction Notes
- Compilation of questionnaires and responses to consultation initiatives and coordination of consolidated Malta position
- Responding to queries arising from a wide range of sources including the authorities of other Member States, various EU structures and local and international organisations
- Submission of reports to the Commission
- Coordination of transposition and notification of EU related legislation and responses to infringement proceedings

Memoranda and Instruction Notes

The process to deal with new Commission proposals at the various levels of discussion is coordinated by the EU Affairs Office. This process consists mainly of preparing updated instruction notes and briefing notes on the agenda items for discussions. The EU Affairs Office is responsible for preparation of instruction and briefing notes (and speaking notes as necessary) for our Maltese representatives attending Council working parties, MERTENS and COREPER meetings, as well as meetings of the Council of Minister. The agendas of these meetings consists of topics on which there was ongoing discussions at EU level, most of them being legislative proposals. The successful preparation of these dossiers is the result of teamwork and a good working relationship with line ministries, EU Secretariat (OPM) and Permanent Representation in Brussels. This office is also responsible to prepare briefing notes for meetings attended by Ministers and Permanent Representative.

Monitoring of the proposal list is conducted at regular intervals in collaboration with EU Secretariat at the OPM. Furthermore these legislative items are classified according to the degree of relevance to Malta. The directorate continues to employ a process of wide consultation in drawing up Malta's position on EU proposals by communicating with a wide range of stakeholders (internal and external) during the formulation process of the position of Malta on these proposals. Key issues that were of direct relevance to this Ministry during 2009, included health and migration, food improvement package, pharmacovigilance and information to patients on medicinal products and counterfeit medicines, EU health strategy, tissues and organs, health care and long-term care actions for social inclusion, patients' rights on cross-border healthcare, rare diseases, health security, anti-microbial resistance and neurodegenerative diseases associated with ageing.

During 2009, this office produced 105 instruction notes, 18 briefing notes and speaking notes. It also processed 23 explanatory memoranda which it presented at the Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) meetings that are chaired by the Permanent Representative for the European Union.

EU Presidency Topics

The following were the main health related topics tackled during the Czech Presidency (January - June 2009 and Swedish Presidency (July - December 2009):

Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the application of patients' rights in cross-border healthcare
Council Recommendation on Patient Safety, including the prevention and control of healthcare associated infections
Council Recommendation on a European action in the field of rare diseases
Proposals for amendments to the Pharmaceutical Legislation
Proposal for a Directive on standards of quality and safety of human organs intended for transplantation
Council Conclusions on Innovative incentives for effective antibiotics
Council Conclusions on safe and efficient healthcare through eHealth
Council Recommendation on seasonal influenza vaccination
Council Conclusions on Alcohol and Health
Council Conclusions on Pandemic Influenza A(H1N1)
Pandemic A (H1N1) - update and follow up to the Council meeting (EPSCO) of 12 October 2009
Council Conclusions on Health and Dignified Ageing
Proposal for Council Recommendations on smoke-free environments
The procurement of vaccine against Pandemic Influenza A(H1N1)
Proposal for a Council Directive on the prevention from sharp injuries in the hospital and healthcare sector concluded by the social partners European Hospital and Healthcare Employers' Association (HOSPEEM) and European Federation of Public Services Unions (EPSU)
Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the provision of food information to consumers
Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on novel foods

This office continued to strengthen its working relationships with other EU Affairs Offices, the EU Secretariat (OPM), the Permanent Representation in Brussels and also foreign entities. This networking continued to increase as a result of the ongoing sharing of information and queries between MS mainly on national legislation and operating procedures in their respective national health systems.

During 2009 the EU Affairs Office channelled a variety of queries from simple questions to questionnaires to requests from large international organisations. Despite strict deadlines, this office managed to work its way to the various stakeholders, sometimes with great difficulty and achieved the desired results. This office also managed several reports and questionnaires. Some of these were Community obligations.

The Office collaborated closely with MEUSAC to disseminate information on health related issues and proposals. The Office was also involved in the consultation by MEUSAC regarding the development of consultation processes within it that will help augment the effectiveness of public consultation on EU instigated issues which are of special importance in their own right or as specifically of interest for Malta. This department participated in two Core Group meetings of MEUSAC and organised two sectoral committee meetings in which a number of health-related issues were discussed with the NGOs and other interested entities that attended.

Participation in Overseas Meetings

This Office participated actively in EU related conferences, seminars, workshops and meetings both locally and abroad. Key overseas meetings attended included:

EPSCO Ministerial Councils (June and December 2009)
Informal Council of Health Ministers (July 2009)
Two extraordinary Council of Health Ministers meeting dealing with the pandemic of the Influenza A(H1N1) (April and October 2009)
Two Council Working Party on Public Health meeting at Senior level (May and December 2009)
Europe Centre for Disease Control - Management Board
Participation in a meetings in relation to the project Assisting Migrants and Communities (AMAC): Better health for all (September 2009)
Policy seminar on Barriers to healthcare services to migrants organised by the European Health Management Association (May 2009)
1 st preparatory meeting for a Joint Action for the European Partnership for Action on Cancer (December 2009)

The DPDEU coordinated attendance to EU meetings in order to ensure that Malta was appropriately represented at all meetings where important decisions are taken. The office was also responsible to identify and nominate national experts in the field of medicines, food, communicable diseases and other public health organisations and networks.

The meetings attended overseas by officers within this Ministry are shown in the Table below. During 2009, the health attaché in Brussels covered most of the relevant working party meetings. This office also keeps records of Health officials attending EU-related meetings, stores reports drawn up from these meetings in its archives and monitors the actions that need to be taken as follow-up.

Meetings attended in 2009 (including meetings attended by the Technical Attaché for Health)						
	<i>Council</i>	<i>Commission</i>	<i>Presidency</i>	<i>WHO</i>	<i>Others</i>	<i>Total</i>
Ministerial	5	0	2	2	1	10
Public Health	35	21	14	1	5	76
Food	10	29	2	0	3	44
Pharmaceuticals	16	13	21	1	104	155
Social security/social questions	0	7	1	0	0	8
Health promotion	0	29	1	1	8	39
Health Information	0	15	1	2	14	32
Regulatory committees; tobacco, blood, tissues & cells	0	19	0	0	10	29,291
Others	2	17	17	4	40	80
Total	66	153	59	11	190	47,319

EU Funds Management

The Director carried out the function of Senior Programming Officer for this Ministry during 2009 only for the projects that had not yet been closed from the Transition Facility Fund and the European Social Fund (2004 - 2006). The roles and responsibilities of identification of new projects suitable for EU funding as well as the monitoring of the project implementation with successful remedial action being taken, were undertaken in collaboration with the Directorate Programme Implementation and Monitoring.

Bilateral Affairs

The Ministry for Social Policy successfully continued to operate the administrative arrangement within the framework of the reciprocal health agreement with the United Kingdom. During 2009, DPDEU continued to be involved on work being done to develop and implement bilateral agreements with several countries. A Memorandum of Understanding on Health matters and Medical services was finalised with Italy and signed in December 2009. DPDEU was also involved in the Joint Commission meeting with Tunisia and in the preparation for a Joint Commission meeting with Libya which was due to take place in January 2010. This Directorate also intensified bilateral collaborations on Health with France, Slovakia and Belgium.

World Health Organisation and International Affairs

The European Union has stepped up its efforts to coordinate its policy and actions within the World Health Organisation. In this respect, the DPDEU supported preparation and the Director was part of the Maltese delegation that attended the annual meeting of WHO Europe held in September and of the World Health Assembly in May. It was active in its role of organising Malta's position on statements and positions vis-à-vis EU coordination activities. This Directorate continued to assist in the coordination of Malta's position on WHO policy in relation to the International Health Regulations and the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.

This Directorate was also the contact point for policy matters at United Nations in the field of health particularly on health aspects related to sexual and reproductive health to ensure that Malta's policy on these matters was consistently promoted and safeguarded.

Staff Development

During 2009, DPDEU continued to experience a marked turnover in staff. There were also five trainees in public health medicine who spent some months with our department as part of their training programme concerned with policy development and international public health. Staff within the DPDEU attended several continuing professional development events and SDO courses throughout the year.

DIRECTORATE FOR PHARMACEUTICAL POLICY AND MONITORING

INTRODUCTION

The Directorate for Pharmaceutical Policy and Monitoring, which was set up in March 2008, has evolved greatly during 2009 both from a human resources point of view as well as from the diversity of functions carried out. Some vacant posts have been filled, strengthening the management structure as well as making it possible for the Directorate to start diversifying on the several functions that were present since its setting up and the various other functions that were added on throughout this year. The technical and non-technical staff is thus being amalgamated into diverse sections that include the Medicines Entitlement Unit, Formulary Management Unit and the Pharmaceutical Health Technology Assessments Unit. The current DPPM premises at the Administrative Block, St Luke's have been extended to cater for the new staff and relevant new sections.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVE

The Directorate of Pharmaceutical Policy and Monitoring has the mission of developing equitable and sustainable pharmaceutical policies for the National Health Service in Malta. It is also tasked to ensure that such policies are implemented effectively through continual and systematic monitoring.

Currently this Directorate has the following functions:

- Pharmaceutical Policy and Monitoring
 - Formulation, monitoring and evaluation of pharmaceutical policies to be implemented in the Government Health Service within the framework of a National Health Policy and international pharmaceutical practices
 - Audit of prescribing policies set by the Government Formulary List Advisory Committee, assess the results of the audit and submit recommendations for necessary action
- Formulary Management
 - Responsibility for the implementation of EU legislation in the field of formulary management
 - Establishment, maintenance and periodical review of the Government National Formulary for pharmaceuticals for the Government Health Service
 - Setting service wide protocols governing prescribing and the rational use of medicines

- Provision of advice and technical assistance in the establishment of technical specifications
- Issue circulars related to formulary management and correspondence with the various stakeholders
- Optimising analysis of information and evaluation of clinical evidence in order to draw up prescribing guidelines and development of a systematic rational approach to prescribing and drug use through the use of international health technology assessment
- Medicines Entitlement Unit
 - Responsibility for the administration of the Medicines Entitlement Unit comprising Schedule V Office and Medicines Approval Section
 - Periodical review of the entitlement process and recommendation of policy options to streamline and standardise procedures, improve efficiency, decrease bureaucracy and offer optimal customer oriented services
 - Develop and maintain an entitlement system for pharmaceuticals. A system where entitlement is universal in application can easily be audited and monitored and cost contained. Integrate all sources of medicine entitlement including Schedule V, Protocol regulated permits, (Pharmacy of Your Choice) POYC registration control and mean-tested entitlement. An entitlement database centre which can be linked to all government dispensing points; POYC, PHCD, MDH, and other government hospitals
 - Process requests on a named-patient basis for exceptional medicinal treatment in a fair, equitable and transparent manner in accordance with an Exceptional Medicinal Treatment Policy
- Pharmaceutical Health Technology Assessment
 - Through the use of Pharmaceuticals Health Technology Assessments (HTAs), analyse information and evaluate clinical evidence regarding requests from Marketing Authorisation as well as Clinical Consultants for introducing new medicinals or new indications of existing medicines on the government formulary for discussion and recommendation by the Government Formulary List Advisory Committee.
 - Contribute to the availability and fair pricing for medicines in the Government Health Service according to Standard Operation Procedures emanating from Maltese legislation. Moreover drug prices across the EU counties can be monitored and followed accordingly
- European and International Pharmaceutical Fora
 - Participation in various EU networks and initiatives relating to Pharmaceutical Policy
 - Establishment of contacts with Pricing and Reimbursement Agencies and Authorities in the various EU countries aimed at continual improvements of various aspects of Pharmaceutical Policy in Malta

THE YEAR UNDER REVIEW

Pharmaceutical Policy

Pharmaceutical policy, the heart of the Directorate, is a branch of health policy that deals with the development, provision and use of medications within a health care system. During 2009, the Directorate was involved in the formulation of several pharmaceutical policies. Some, such as the Exceptional Medicinal Treatment Policy, were finalised whilst several others are currently being drafted or have been drafted and are undergoing the consultation process. These policies include topics listed below:

- Entitlement for Schedule V Chronic Conditions
- Medicines Entitlement for HIV sero-positive patients
- Entitlement Policy for Protocol-Regulated Medicinal Treatment
- Medicines Entitlement Policy for Spinal Injury Patients
- Medicines Entitlement for Hospital Acquired infections
- Policy regarding Medicines Entitlement for Migrants

Following the setting up of such policies, it is envisaged that an exercise in setting out Standard Operating Procedures emanating from these policies would be taken up in the next year.

Formulary Management

Formulary Management has always been an integral part of the Directorate. Throughout this year, the Directorate was highly involved in reviewing thoroughly and revamping the Government Formulary List

(GFL). This included the usual updating of the formulary list regarding introduction of new medicines, amendment of protocols, changes in prescriber criteria and deletions of medicines from the list. However for the first time, the GFL is now being classified into two lists, one for in-patient use and another for out-patient use. This initiative is being currently tackled as holistically as possible with discussions being held with several stakeholders such as Clinical Chairmen, Clinical Pharmacists, Dispensing Pharmacists and other interested parties. The next step that would be initiated early next year would involve the mapping of individual medicinals with indications for each Schedule V condition.

Another major exercise was also performed for those medicinals falling under Schedule II; the pink card positive items. These were classified into three categories – those for acute use, chronic use and both chronic and acute as part of the establishment of better dispensing practices and a more streamlined entitlement process.

During 2009 there were six new introductions, 13 deletions and 68 amendments for medicines in the Government Formulary.

In conjunction with the formulary project, the current protocols for medicinal entitlement are being revised. This review is being performed in a pro-active manner taking into consideration changes in treatment protocols service wide and rational use of medicines throughout the Government Health Service. Here also the input of Clinical Chairmen, Consultants and Pharmacists has been requested, suggestions analysed and wherever appropriate, incorporated. During 2009, six new protocols were drawn up, 15 protocols were amended and 10 protocols deleted.

As part of DPPM's responsibility for the implementation of EU legislation in the field of formulary management, Legal Notice 58/09 concerning pharmaceuticals available on the Government Health Service was issued, to provide the necessary legal framework for Government to reach an agreement regarding fair pricing of purchased medicinals for the Government Health Sector. This legal notice replaced the previous LN 165/07 that had dealt only with the reimbursement of medicinal products. This new LN aims at promoting public health by ensuring the availability of adequate supplies of medicinal products at a reasonable cost. The Directorate is now in the process of setting up a Standard Operating Procedure emanating from this LN that defines the procedures, criteria and mechanisms to be adopted in respect of pricing of medicinals for the Government Health Service.

The Directorate for Pharmaceutical Policy has this year been very much involved in provision of advice and assistance on technical specifications that range from simple specification changes of individual items to reflect changes in dosing, and formulations, to review of whole classes of pharmaceuticals such as B Agonist inhalers, Angiotensin-II, Receptor Antagonists, Statins, Insulins and Biphosphonates. From documentation available, there were 38 requests for such changes in specifications emanating from Government Health Procurement Services. There were also a total of 40 queries regarding various other aspects of formulary management.

As part of its formulary management functions, DPPM was involved in the notification and issuing of numerous circulars to Clinical Chairmen, Consultants and Pharmacists, dealing with several aspects of pharmaceutical care such as changes in medicinal products, formulations, doses etc. Eight such circulars were issued.

Medicines Entitlement Unit

One of the main tasks and challenges for the current year was the setting up of a new Medicines Entitlement Unit. The idea behind the setting up of this Unit was to amalgamate the Schedule V Office at St Luke's with the Medicines Approval Section currently at Mater Dei Hospital in order to provide a one-stop-shop to patients requiring such a service. This Unit will be housed in new offices at St Luke's Hospital following the completion of an extensive programme of refurbishment works.

The Directorate has been working a Business Process Re-engineering Plan of the processes involved; a project that has been needed for a long time, setting out of new policies governing medicinals entitlement, designing of new forms that are more informative, streamlined, efficient, standardised and patient, dispenser and prescriber friendly. A much improved and holistic database for Medicines Entitlement is in the process of being installed that will reflect the changes being implemented.

Meetings were held regularly with the Pharmacy Systems Manager in charge of the new database. Regular weekly meetings were also held with the Medicines Entitlement Section as well as with the Schedule V Office to iron out several queries emanating from their offices.

Statistical Data

Queries from Medicines Approval Section	550
Queries from Schedule V office	1,100

Schedule 5 Cards

Newly Approved	30,550
Sent back due to insufficient information	1,100
Requiring Treatment Additions	500
Total	32,150

Medicines Approval Section

New or renewed protocol-regulated drugs	36,000
Resent copies for lost or misplaced permits	6,000
Queries handled	5,000

Another principal task of the DPPM throughout this year was the Medicinal Entitlement Project wherein the current chronic conditions under Schedule V were evaluated. After consultation with the Clinical Chairmen involved, new conditions were evaluated and considered and a full report submitted to higher authorities for consideration.

The system for approving requests for medicinals on a named-patient basis was reviewed and revised with a view to being more equitable, fair, transparent and sustainable. For this reason a policy was formulated, the Exceptional Medicinal Treatment Policy, that is assessed according to specified, listed criteria including severity, urgency and rarity of condition, previous or alternative treatments and costs involved. Other important considerations include licensing of medications for conditions, orphan drug status, consideration and recommendations of other international agencies for reimbursement of medicinals as well as scientific/clinical evidence of effectiveness. This policy was approved and is being currently used to assess EMT requests. A Standard Operating Procedure to be followed is currently also being drafted. Throughout this year, there were 521 such requests, out of which 84 were rejected and 437 were approved.

Pharmaceutical Health Technology Assessment

Requests from Marketing Authorisation Holders and Clinical Consultants for introducing new medicines or new indications of existing medicines on the Government Formulary are reviewed and assessed via Pharmaceuticals Health Technology Assessment in line with other European countries' procedures. Statistical data show that there was a total of 31 new requests received for introduction of new medicinals on the Government Formulary (24 from Marketing Authorisation Holders and seven from Public Hospital Consultants). A Standard Operating Procedure to be followed for the processing of such requests is currently being set out.

Government Formulary List Advisory Committee (GFLAC)

This committee emanates from the above mentioned legislation and was set up towards the end of 2007 to assist the Ministry of Health with the management of the Formulary List for the National Health Service. In 2009, it met twice and discussed two requests for introduction of new medicinals into the Government Formulary. In view of a change in the legal notice, the current Committee was resolved. The setting up of a new Committee was temporarily put on hold pending a decision on the pricing operating procedure to be

adopted and the furnishing of a specific budgetary allocation. This decision was taken and the new committee is in the process of being set up. A ring fenced Budgetary approval of €3 million specifically for the introduction of new medicinals on the formulary for 2010 was a very positive step in the right direction aimed at addressing the current technological gap brought about by innovative pharmaceuticals and modern treatment regimes.

Local Conferences and Meetings

The 7th Malta Medical School Conference held between 5 and 7 November 2009 was attended for the first time. Two posters were presented: one regarding the Government Formulary List, and the other regarding the Integration of Medicines Entitlement System.. The conference was multidisciplinary and focused on various specialities, including pharmacy, public health, cardiovascular and anaesthesia. Plenary sessions were led by various foreign specialists in the field.

EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL FORA

Pricing and Reimbursement Projects

Several EU projects emanating that had been started in previous years were continued in 2009. These projects aid in the collaboration of technical information gathering and sharing between members of the EU and EFTA and include:

- **INFOPRICE** – The Infoprice Project, an initiative of the Transparency Committee Secretariat, continued with its data gathering, analysis and disseminating of wholesale and retail prices of 15 specific pharmaceuticals in the EU member states and EFTA. This helps individual member states to monitor their drug prices, compare them to other member states and possibly identify ways and methods of obtaining less costly medicinal treatments.
- **PHIS** - The PHIS (Pharmaceutical Health Information System) is a European Commission funded project, commissioned by the Executive Agency for Health and Consumers under the call for proposals 2007 in the priority area ‘health information’ of the European Commission, DG Sanco, and co-funded by the Austrian Ministry of Health. The PHIS project aims at increasing knowledge and exchange of information on pharmaceutical policies, in particular pricing and reimbursements, in the EU Member States, covering both the out-patient and in-patient sector. Malta participates regularly in the PHIS Network meetings. During this year the DPPM contributed to this project by compiling the PHIS Hospital Pharma Report 2009 which was published and can be accessed on <http://phis.goeg.at/>. Information about healthcare services, funding, pricing, national hospital reimbursement procedures, hospital pharmaceutical formulary, consumption of pharmaceuticals, monitoring, assessments, interface management and current developments was provided.
- **PPRI** - PPRI (Pharmaceutical Pricing and Reimbursement Information) is a networking and information-sharing initiative on issues of pharmaceutical policies from a public health perspective. It involves a network of almost 60 institutions (mainly competent authorities and third party payers) from the whole EU, plus Albania, Canada, Iceland, Norway, South Africa, Switzerland and Turkey. The overall aim of the PPRI project was to improve information and knowledge on the pharmaceutical systems in the Member States of the enlarged EU, by strengthening the networking of the relevant national authorities and institutions in the field of pharmaceuticals in the EU. The DPPM is currently compiling the PPRI Pharma Profile Report 2009. Information about the pharmaceutical system, regulatory framework, pharmaceutical market, market players, funding of pharmaceuticals, methods of evaluation, pricing system, pricing policies and procedures, price related cost-containing measures, organisation of the reimbursement system, rational use of pharmaceuticals, pharmaco-economics and current challenges will be provided.
- **Eminet** - Eminet is a new project established in December 2008. This project, supported by the European Commission, DG Enterprise will run for 4 years and is aimed at providing support to pricing and reimbursement decisions and policy makers of the EU countries. This will be achieved by collecting,

comparing and disseminating information on different pricing and reimbursement practices and cost-containment mechanisms by the MS. The objectives, that vary every year will for 2009 deal with orphan drug surveys, generics, risk-sharing agreements, parallel trading, preferential pricing and global market impact (mostly the US and large countries such as Brazil and India). Current surveys are being undertaken in which Malta is also participating.

- **EUNetHA** – EUNetHA is a new project initiated in May 2009 and is envisaged to run till 2012. The new legislation on ‘Cross Border Health Care’ the EU has become more involved in the implementation of networking for the assessment of new medical interventions and other technologies that will be and may be reimbursed in most EU countries. Hence an initiative was taken by DG Sanco and DG Enterprise to encourage joint assessments of relative effectiveness of new innovative pharmaceuticals and sustainable cooperation on health technologies.

Representation in EU Networks and Committees

- *Networking meetings for Competent Authorities for Pricing and Reimbursements of Pharmaceuticals organised by the Presidency:* Since there is a constant need at EU level for more intensive cooperation among the competent authorities for pricing and reimbursement of pharmaceuticals, networking meetings are organised by the current presidencies on a regular basis. These meetings are intended to establish a networking process among EU Member States authorities in coordination with the European Commission. The Directorate of Pharmaceutical Policy and Monitoring participates and contributes actively in these networking meetings.
- *Transparency Committee:* The Council Directive 89/105/EEC laid down harmonised provisions to ensure the transparency of national provisions in the regulations of pricing and reimbursement of medicinal products. This is commonly referred to as the "Transparency Directive". Article 10 of the Directive establishes a consultative committee, called the "Transparency Committee". The Transparency Committee includes representatives of all Member States and is chaired by the European Commission; it is responsible for discussing issues relating to the implementation of the Directive. The DPPM represents Malta in the Transparency Committee where regular meetings are held throughout the year.
- *Other meetings, workshops and conferences:*
 - Expert Conference assessing Drug Effectiveness held in Stockholm and Brussels
 - PIPERSKA workshop - the Managed Introduction of New Medicines: the Principles of Health Technology Assessment (HTA) and Horizon Scanning
 - A conference hosted under the Swedish Presidency of the European Union was arranged by VINNOVA, the Swedish Governmental Agency for Innovation Systems regarding Public Procurement
 - A training week regarding Innovation and Health Technology Assessment: Improving Health System Quality organised by the Observatory Venice Summer School in July.

Other Initiatives and Projects

This year, the Directorate for Pharmaceutical Policy and Monitoring continued to enhance further its efforts to provide a transparent decision making process and improve public relations.

- *Liaison with stakeholders:*
 - Several meetings were organised with Pharmacists within the different areas of the Government Health Service to discuss several issues and clarifications regarding diverse aspects of Pharmaceutical Policy including the new formulary, entitlement procedures, specific medicinals such as anti-cancer drugs, antibiotics, HIV treatment. These included Clinical Pharmacists at Mater Dei Hospital, Gozo General Hospital, Health Centre Pharmacist representatives, POYC, Zammit Clapp Hospital, Mt Carmel Hospital, Boffa Hospital and the Government Health Procurement Services. The Directorate was also involved in a meeting organised by the Malta Chamber of Pharmacists regarding new entitlement procedures to be adopted by Community Pharmacists within the POYC scheme. The Directorate also dealt with a number of queries including 130 from dispensaries including POYC and 150 from Clinical Sections.

- The Directorate organised several meetings with Clinical Chairmen and Clinical Consultants in diverse fields such as Endocrinology, Chemotherapy, Cardiac, Neurology and Antibiotics Committee in order to discuss pending issues and queries re exceptional treatment, protocols, policies, specifications of medicinal products and other matters where in pharmaceutical service offered by DPPM could be improved for the benefit of the patient
- The Directorate also had several meetings with other stakeholders such as the Malta Diabetes Society, PRIMA, Corrective Facilities Manager regarding inmates' entitlement to medicinal treatment; Consumer Competition Division and WasteServ.
- The Directorate was very actively involved in answering and following up queries from diverse sectors of the public - 80 from patients, five from the local media, 63 parliamentary questions. Moreover there were a number of queries from local (5) and foreign (2) Marketing Authorisation Holders.
- *Project plans for new Initiatives:*
 - Setting up of an Entitlement Unit for Pharmaceuticals: The issue of entitlement to free medicines is rather complex and in need of serious review. The system currently suffers from loopholes, bureaucratic processes, mis-entitlements and inequities that have developed over time and tackled in a piecemeal manner. A system is being planned that would streamline the entitlement procedures and policies so as to improve efficiency, decrease bureaucracy and offer optimal patient oriented services and at the same time provide entitlement that is universal in application, can be easily audited and monitored and cost contained. This system will integrate all sources of medicine entitlement including Schedule V, Protocol regulated permits, POYC registration control and means-tested entitlement. A database linked with all dispensaries (POYC, PHCD, MDH and other government institutions). Such an entitlement system would rely heavily on a sound, versatile and efficient software system. The brief for such a system has already been drawn up and submitted to the Information Management Unit for development.
 - The setting up of a Pricing Unit for Pricing and Reimbursement Functions: This Pricing Unit is aimed at (a) contributing to the availability and fair pricing for government pharmaceuticals through monitoring of drug prices across EU countries; (b) performing relative effectiveness assessments of new medicines being requested by the Market Authorisation Holders (as per EU Transparency Directive 89/05 and LN 58/09) and Consultants within the GHS; (c) participating in EU projects for a common drug database; and (d) setting up systems and continuous maintenance and update of databases relating to prices of pharmaceuticals including DPPM Pharmaceutical pricing databases as well as European drug databases.

DIRECTORATE FOR HEALTH INFORMATION AND RESEARCH

Introduction

The mission of the Directorate for Health Information and Research (DHIR) is to provide accurate information for the protection of public health, statistical purposes, research and preventive medicine. It promotes and supports the development of health information systems. The scope of the department also includes research in its remit.

Functions and Objectives

The Department of Health Information and Research leads the collection, analysis and delivery of health related information in Malta. It strives to provide high quality epidemiological information and indicators on the health of the population and health services. Health information is made available for policy and decision makers, for the public in general, interested institutions and other that may require it.

Research initiatives are taken and assistance is provided to the Director General (Strategy and Sustainability) by contributing the necessary evidence for the formulation of policy and strategy in the area of public health and health services for both existing and proposed programmes.

- To gather, analyse and disseminate health information
- To conduct epidemiological surveys and maintain disease registers

- To maintain and develop the range of services and products that the Department produces, ranging from reports to requests for customised information, accurately and in a timely manner
- To coordinate and prepare reports identifying issues, problems, unmet needs and service gaps, and recommend initiatives, review of policies, and amendments to procedures and programmes as required
- To develop the infrastructure needed for the provision of non-expenditure data for the System of Health Account
- To promote and carry out research
- To communicate relevant results and reports from the above initiatives to stakeholders and the public

THE YEAR UNDER REVIEW

Activities Common to all Sections of the Directorate

Policy Positions

The Directorate was required to give its expert advice for the formulation of policy positions on numerous EU related proposals, including the following:

- Memorandum on the reduction of health inequalities in the EU
- Proposal for an Implementation Regulation for Causes of Death Statistics
- Proposal for an Implementation Regulation for Health Care Statistics
- Position paper on maternal morbidity and mortality
- Implementation of Health Programme 2010 – Joint Actions
- Position Paper on Health and Dignified Aging

Registry Database

- All registries were implemented in the new database, even though some are still operating on a local server. Testing of various aspects of these modules is taking place with a view to migrating to the live server very soon. Additional features, such as facilities for automatic reporting and data mining solutions are currently being developed.
- Work has continued on the development of interactive online national databases. These are expected to be launched early in 2010.

Data Requests

- 151 requests for information (of which 32 through Health Information mail) and 25 replies to parliamentary questions were processed.

Commitment to the Freedom of Information Act

- Following the passing in Parliament of the Freedom of Information Act in February 2009 and the subsequent coming into force of the majority part of the law on 27 November 2009, the DHIR committed itself to become abreast with the FOI requirements, with the intention of ensuring that it honoured the principles and practices stipulated therein.
- The DHIR was selected to nominate the principal Freedom of Information Focal Point who was to coordinate work amongst all other Strategy & Sustainability Division Focal Points, when so needed. To this effect the selected DHIR Focal Point attended the first briefing session held in December 2009 by the Ministry of Justice and Home Affairs .

Data Protection

- Official authorisation to regularise the work being carried out by the Department in particular the National Health Registers, has been attained through the release of a DH circular issued in January DH36/09. Through this circular the Superintendent of Public Health delegates the power of data collection for purposes of public health to the Department of Health Information and Research.

- The draft Manual of Data Protection for the DHIR is being discussed with the OPM Data Protection Unit before it is finalised and approved.
- All new staff is being enrolled on Data Protection courses run by SDO to sensitize them to the confidentiality of the data that they are handling.

ROUTINE ACTIVITIES ON NATIONAL INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Malta National Mortality Registry (MNMR)

During the year, 3,291 death certificates were received by the Mortality Register at the DHIR. Validation involved checking demographic details through the Patient Administration System (PAS) and Common Database (CdB). The PAS was also updated with date and place of death of those having died in 2009.

Processing involved coding of occupation, and causes of death. 20% of death certificates require further information to be obtained from other sources due to lack of good medical data and detailed information required. These other sources included deceased patient records, newspapers, police, pathologists, toxicologists as well as the certifier him/herself. A copy of death certificates involving cancers, infectious diseases, occupational diseases and congenital anomalies was made for the relevant registries. Collection of data regarding Maltese residents dying abroad required specific tracing from the Public Registry.

During 2009 the Annual Mortality Reports for 2007 & 2008 were issued. These were made available on the DHIR website. Training for doctors to fill in death certificates has been formally included in the foundation programme for house officers. Doctors were given a 2-hour training session with practical examples of how to complete the death certificate.

The Mortality Registry has started a surveillance monitoring system in collaboration with Disease Surveillance Unit, aimed at monitoring weekly deaths in view of the Influenza A H1N1.

Malta National Cancer Registry (MNCR)

During the year, 334 notifications of cancers were reported by medical doctors, 437 were recorded from death certificates and 23,830 results were reviewed from the Mater Dei Histopathology software. All these cases included 2008 and 2009 (till end of September) as access to the Mater Dei histopathology lab program was given in October 2008. 20,710 cases were extracted and cross-checked in both Cancer Register databases to exclude any duplicates. These included all 2009 benign cases which have been recorded in the same database. 450 cases were extracted from St James Hospital histopathology laboratory and 913 cases were received from the Oncology Department. All new cases were coded and entered in the National Cancer Register at the DHIR. All already registered cases were edited in their respective database program and filed. The following table indicates the source and the number of cases which were received during 2009:

Source	Number of cases
Mater Dei Histopathology Lab	20,710 (Both for 2008 and 2009)
Mater Dei Cytology lab	267
Oncology Department	913
Private Hospitals and Clinics	450
Notifications from doctors	334
Mortality Register	437

The National Cancer Registry also reviewed a number of deceased patient records (20 files per month) in order to obtain further information about the cancer in case of problem in diagnosis as well as adding further information about risk factors and staging.

2007 cancer incidence data has been checked and edited.

National Obstetric Information System

The National Obstetrics Information System received, checked, coded, entered and validated 4,664 NOIS data sheets. A new computerised database is being tested for use so as the Registry will be in a position to report most data being requested by the EU.

This year the Register carried out an audit of the mode of onset of delivery and as a result of this audit the hospital file delivery record sheet has been updated and improved to better document delivery.

The NOIS Annual Report for 2008 was compiled in 2009 together with two interim reports. These are available, together with several other reports, on the Department's website. The NOIS website was kept regularly updated throughout the year.

The Registry continued active participation in the EU EUROPERISTAT project, attending the annual meeting held in April. This year the Register is participating in a Delphi process investigating the best way forward for surveillance of maternal and infant health on an EU level.

Malta Congenital Anomalies Registry (MCAR)

In 2009, the Malta Congenital Anomalies Registry actively identified a total of 135 infants/foetuses as cases of potential congenital anomalies from obstetric wards. Various other sources of information including paediatric echocardiography reports, the national obstetrics information system, the national mortality register, hospital activity analysis and hypothyroid screening were also used to identify further potential cases. As part of the processing, validation and confirmation of congenital anomaly, 375 hospital files of both mothers and babies were reviewed this year.

In 2009, the Register started using a newly developed database, allowing collection of further variables in order to satisfy EU requirements. All previous data collected by the Register is to be transferred to this new database in the coming year.

This year, the data for 2007 was completed and published on the MCAR website. Anonymous data was sent in the required format to the international organisations of which the register is a member. For 2007, 100 infants/foetuses were confirmed and registered in the MCAR with major congenital anomaly.

The Registry continued active participation in two international project networks: EUROCAT (European Surveillance of Congenital Anomalies) and ICBDSR (International Clearinghouse for Birth Defects Surveillance and Research). Through participation with these bodies in 2009, Malta's data was approved for participation in several international collaborative studies.

Malta National Organ Transplant Registry

The National Transplant Registry website was updated with transplants performed during 2008. During 2009 a number of notifications for transplants done in Malta as well as for organ donations sent abroad were received at DHIR. The total number of transplants carried out in Malta (kidney, heart and corneal) amounted to 31.

National Hospitals Information System (NHIS)

This relatively new system will eventually collect data on hospital activity from acute state and private hospitals. To date no data from the private sector is being collected.

NHIS has collected full record-based data from Gozo General Hospital (GGH) since July 2004. Validation of hospital data for 2008 and data entry into the Gozo General Hospital Activity database was continued in

2009. It was analysed to produce a clear picture of activity at this hospital for the whole year. A report of detailed hospital activity for GGH for 2008 was prepared in June 2009.

By the end of 2009, NHIS had received 5,378 GGH clinical, episode-based sheets with respect to admissions that took place until 30 November 2009. Out of these, 5,293 records have so far been validated and entered into the database. To date NHIS is still receiving data sheets from GGH for episodes of care in 2009.

Anonymous record based data from Mater Dei Hospital was collected for 2008 from the hospital's Hospital Activity Analysis System and the Electronic Discharge Summary Data. This data was merged with data from Gozo General Hospital. The resulting aggregated data was analysed and sent to EUROSTAT as part of the latter's annual request on non expenditure health care statistics data.

EUROSTAT's yearly health care statistics non expenditure data requests

Eurostat carries out an annual data collection on health care statistics (non-expenditure data), covering data at National level on health staff (manpower/health care professionals), equipment and use of health resources in the field of health care. The data request from EUROSTAT is structured into three parts:

- routine data collection on health staff (manpower), hospital beds and beds in residential institutions and procedures by category of episode of care performed in hospitals;
- routine data collection on hospital patients, core output and high-tech resources: This is based on the recommendations of the Task Force on Hospital Statistics Minimum Data Set and on the agreement reached at the OECD/Eurostat/WHO meeting on a morbidity shortlist for hospital discharges; the International Shortlist of Hospital Morbidity Tabulation (ISHMT). Included with this data collection is a section dealing with patient migration;
- data collection on hospital manpower and technical resources and a mapping exercise for the nursing professions.

EUROSTAT's 2009 request for data (basis year 2008) was answered with the data which was available, and was forwarded in July 2009.

The year 2009 saw a new initiative taking place on an international level whereby the OECD, EUROSTAT and WHO embarked on a Joint Data Collection system for non-monetary health care statistics that would hereafter facilitate matters for each respective country submitting information/data to these entities. Each request for information would hereafter generally be replied to only once, on a joint basis to the three entities together, ensuring consistency in the reply content.

To help implement this system, the first exercise requested from all countries by OECD, EUROSTAT and WHO in November/December 2009 (and with which DHIR fully collaborated) was to give a definitive decision on which of Malta's previous three statistical submissions (if differing at all) DHIR would commit itself to hereafter submit. In addition, DHIR also collaborated by replying about which of the three entities' official clinical-domain definitions did Malta hold, so that statistical parameters governing Malta may be thus established. Such definitions encompassed the various clinical professions/graduates, hospital employment, hospital beds and medical technology equipment.

Following this OECD-EUROSTAT-WHO harmonisation of the Joint Collection system, DHIR would eventually be expected to send its first such "collective" data in 2010.

Injury Database

This Register collates data regarding Accidents and Injuries. Data from the A&E Department at Gozo General Hospital is still ongoing with a difference that a member of DHIR is retrieving data from the A&E Register. IDB forms are no longer filled in by members of the A&E Department. Till the end of

November, 2,693 episodes were collected and 2,404 were checked, coded and data entered. This figure is still not complete as data still has to be submitted for December and other episodes have to be retrieved from cross-checks with NHIS and NMNR. Data for 2008 was submitted to the Department of Home, Leisure & Sports in Austria for collation of IDB Final Report of participating EU countries.

The processing of data from A&E, Mater Dei Hospital will be possible this year as the data mining software was finalised. It is envisaged that by mid-February DHIR will start processing January data.

DHIR is also participating in EASI (European Alert System on Injuries). The main purpose of EASI is to provide more timely access to IDB data. Requests are sent to the National Data Administrators and are asked to respond with a few days.

Public Health Reporting & Research

European Health Interview Survey (EHIS)

Two reports from the EHIS 2008 were launched on 3 June. These reports were *Summary Statistics* which gave an overview of the main data from the questionnaire and *Utilisation of Healthcare Services* which dealt specifically with health service use, medication consumption, prevention, health insurance and out-of-pocket expenses. Three other reports were finalised in December and will be launched early in 2010 covering the Elderly, Mental Health and Lifestyles.

System of Health Accounts (SHA)

The year started with a mission from the Portuguese officer responsible for SHA in Portugal, following which a mission report was compiled by her, giving some advice regarding the implementation of SHA in Malta. This was followed by a twinning light project with NiCO, through which further training and evaluation was given to DHIR from experts from Slovenia, UK and Germany, with Slovenia taking the main role.

A task force set up for the compilation of SHA held two meetings during 2009. Development work experienced some delay due to the termination of employment of two key members of the task force.

European Health Examination Survey (EHES)

A joint action was issued with Finland being the lead partner. Malta outlined a budget for piloting EHES with a sample of 200 participants and committed itself to join this action. The project proposal was accepted by EUROSTAT.

WHO-EURO Health for All (HFA)

Data on Health Indicators for the year 2008 was submitted to WHO-EURO towards the end of 2009.

Statistics Clinic

The statistics clinic remained highly in demand during 2009. While attempts were made to maintain appointments on the prescribed slots on Tuesdays and Thursdays afternoons, these days are increased during peak demand periods such as May and September.

Health Ethics Committee

DHIR continued its support to the Health Ethics Committee. Permanent secretarial support is still being provided by DHIR, together with the coordination of all its activity.

Scientific Publications by DHIR Staff in 2008

DHIR staff was involved in a number of collaborative research activities during 2009. A number of conference presentations and publications arose from these studies.

Projects

The DHIR continued to participate in a number of EU funded projects during 2009. These projects, whilst requiring a commitment in terms of time and human resource effort, have provided an opportunity for growth and development of new activities as well as networking opportunities at a European level particularly on a number of activities which are relevant to Maltese health policy.

RARECARE (Rare Cancers)

A project aimed at assessing and evaluating the quality of rare cancers in Europe. The project spans over three years and will provide incidence, prevalence and mortality of rare cancers. Data quality for a subset of rare cancers will be analysed. A website on rare cancers will be developed as a means of disseminating information on rare cancers.

EPIDERM

The National Cancer Registry collaborated with the Department of Dermatology on a European Prevention Initiative for Dermatological Malignancies. The aim was to collect information on skin cancer with special emphasis on incidence, risk factors, treatment and costs involved. This study is to implement a prevention and recommendation programme. This project is still ongoing and will be finished by the end of 2010.

European Disability and Social Integration Module pilot study

Malta, along with 10 member states, participated in the pilot study of the European Disability and Social Integration Module. This is a pilot of a questionnaire that aims to measure the level of disability and social exclusion within the community and find the roots of this disability or exclusion. DHIR undertook the pilot study with a sample size of 550 Maltese residents aged 18 years and over. A public health specialist was contracted to conduct the translation of the questionnaire into Maltese and staff within the Ministry were enlisted and trained to undertake the role of interviewers. DHIR staff worked tirelessly to manage the logistics of the project including sending out introduction letters to those selected for the pilot and managing the outgoing and incoming questionnaires. Scanning and data analysis was then conducted. Due to the swine flu outbreak in July, the fieldwork process was a long and laborious one but, overall, a satisfactory response rate of 57% was achieved despite the difficult circumstances. A report was finalised and the project group will now discuss the findings of this pilot study within the 10 participating member states to outline the way forward in the implementation of the questionnaire into a full blown study.

Other Collaboration

Malta Medical School Conference

A number of staff from DHIR participated in the 3-day Malta Medical School Conference held in November. DHIR submitted 14 abstracts for poster or oral presentations covering various topics such as fatal traffic accidents, breast cancer survival, smoking and alcohol consumption, private and public GP use, the Injury Database, sexual health and others. This work formed a substantial part of the work on public health presented during this conference.

Malta Science and Technology Week (MCST)

In December, the Malta Council for Science and Technology held the Science and Technology Festival at the University of Malta. DHIR was invited to participate in the week-long activity. Poster presentations

were set up in a joint stand with the Department of Health Promotion and Disease Surveillance while staff members in the research section held an hour-long lecture for 130 secondary students about the process of research combined with the promotion of physical activity.

Green Initiatives

Recycling of all plastic bottles and white paper continued unabated.

The roof membrane was whitewashed to decrease temperatures on the second floor in summer months and lessen the use of air conditioners. Electricity readings taken monthly for the months June to September show a consumption of 1,578 units when compared to 2,098 units over the same period last year.

500ml plastic bottles were inserted in all flushing tanks. Meter readings for the first 11 months of the year show that 92 units of water were consumed when compared to 103 for the same period in 2008. Two defective dripping taps were changed to further avoid any possible water waste.

Other Meetings Abroad

European Perinatal Epidemiology Network Meeting, London, 6-7 April

10th EUROCAT European Symposium and EUROCAT Registry Leaders Meeting, Bilbao, 10-12 June

Eurocare 5th Plenary meeting, Genoa, 10-12 March

Rarecare: Cancer Registries and rare cancers: quality of data and supplementary information, Granada, 25 March

Meeting of technical group on causes of death (Eurostat), 6-7 May

Meeting and workshop on Drug related deaths (EMCDDA), Lisbon, 11-13 November

3rd International Cancer Control Congress, Como, 8-11 November

2nd NDA Training Session, Vienna, 14-15 May

Cancer survival: principles, methods and analysis (Training Session); London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, 22-26 June

Europe of the health consumer (health consumer powerhouse), Prague, 5 March

Technical Group CARE, Luxembourg, 19-20 March

Technical Group Morbidity, Luxembourg, 13 May

Technical Group HIS, Luxembourg, 14-15 May

Task force on health expectancies, Luxembourg, 29 October

Core Group HIS, (Rome-March; Luxembourg-October)

Task force on Institutionalised People, Luxembourg (February/May)

Working Group Public Health Statistics, Luxembourg, October

Health Information Committee Meetings, Luxembourg (April/July/October)

Extended Health Information Committee, Luxembourg, October

5th European Meeting of WHO National Counterparts on Health Statistics, Turkey, December

PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION DIRECTORATE

ROLE OF THE DIRECTORATE

During 2009, the Programme Implementation Directorate continued to focus on its core responsibilities namely:

- monitoring the implementation of projects, measures and initiatives falling within the remit of the Ministry for Social Policy as arising from the National Reform Programme, the National Report on Strategies for Social Protection and Social Inclusion (2008-2010) and the National Budget; and
- overseeing the implementation of EU co-financed projects being executed by the various departments and entities pertaining to MSOC.

THE YEAR UNDER REVIEW

Monitoring of programmes, measures and initiatives

Following an intensive exercise to extrapolate those measures, programmes and initiatives listed in the key documents referred to in (a) above, the Directorate extrapolated a total of 92 social affairs measures and 95 health, elderly and community care measures. The table below shows the number of measures as extrapolated from the three national documents. Measure owners were identified and individual meetings were held so as to discuss the monitoring procedure designed by the Directorate with a view to ensure efficient and effective monitoring as well as timely and comprehensive reporting. An agreement was reached with all concerned and progress reports were regularly compiled so as to keep the Line Ministry and all relevant entities posted with developments.

Number of measures	National Strategies Report 2008-2010	National Reform Programme 2008-2010	Budget 2009
66	√		
7	√	√	
15	√		√
2		√	
2			√
3	√	√	√

Customer Care System (Local Councils)

In previous years, the Directorate had been entrusted with operating the Customer Care system as a *clearance house* for the Health Division. By virtue of this system, which used to operate in conjunction with local councils, the Directorate was required to address various queries and complaints that were raised by the general public regarding matters concerning various health issues. The Directorate used to refer such queries and complaints to the attention of the responsible department/entity and follow the matter through so as to ensure that the general public duly receives a reply or explanation.

Following the Directorate's reactivation in 2008 of discussions to gradually decentralise the Health Division's Customer Care System (Local Councils) so as to promote efficiency when addressing clients' queries and complaints, the new decentralised system was introduced in 2009. This has initially been implemented in four departments, namely Environmental Health Department, Customer Care Department (Mater Dei Hospital), Primary Health Care Department and Department for the Elderly. It is planned that in the future, the Customer Care System (Local Councils) will be completely decentralised.

Quality Service Charters

Following the 2008 external evaluation exercise of Quality Service Charters undertaken by the Charter Support Unit, a report showing the findings and recommendations in respect of each established Quality Service Charter (QSC) was issued in 2009. The Programme Implementation Directorate followed up this audit exercise by requesting each QSC contact person to (a) inform it as to how and when will the respective department/entity implement the recommendations presented by the Charter Support Unit in their audit report, and (b) to identify any problems or concerns that may hinder implementation of recommendations. In this way, during 2009, the Directorate continued to consolidate its commitment to contribute towards enhancing service standards in the interest of the general public

Better Regulation (Reduction of Burdensome Procedures)

During 2009, the Directorate continued to contribute towards Government's commitment to reduce burdensome procedures. The Directorate worked closely with the Management Efficiency Unit, Government's lead entity in this regard as well as with departments and entities falling within the remit of MSOC so as to identify and reduce administrative burdens. A reduction in such burdens should contribute

towards the achievement of Malta's national target to reduce administrative burdens resulting from information obligations on businesses by 15% by the year 2012.

Other Contributions

During 2009, the Programme Implementation Directorate was also actively involved in the following committees and working groups:

- National Implementing Body of the European Year for combating Poverty and Social Exclusion (2010)
- Ministry for Social Policy Steering Committee for EU Structural Funds Projects
- IB Steering Committee for EU Funded Aid Schemes being implemented by entities falling within the remit of MSOC
- National Report on Strategies for Social Protection and Social Inclusion Working Group

EU Co-funded Projects

Departments and entities falling within the remit of the Ministry for Social Policy filed various project applications for EU co-financing. The Directorate Programme Implementation provided its assistance as and where applicable, followed up the outcome of the decisions taken by the Project Selection Committee, and oversaw the implementation of those projects that were approved for EU co-financing in terms of the Health, Elderly and Community Care remit of the Ministry. During 2009 the Directorate was involved in the preparation and submission of applications for EU co-financing under the European Regional Development Fund, the Swiss Funds and Emergency Measures. The project applications which are still in the process of adjudication are shown in the following table:

Type of EU Funding	Project details
European Regional Development Fund	Proposal for the building of a new oncology hospital
Swiss Funds	Procurement of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a PET/Scan - a Linac Accelerator - a Cardiac MRI
Emergency Measures	The Health Division within MSOC was granted €70,000 for the setting up of three mobile homes to be used as isolation and treatment units

The Way Forward

During 2010, the Directorate will once again be split into two directorates for social policy and health respectively.

DR NATASHA AZZOPARDI MUSCAT
Director General (Strategy and Sustainability)

Social Policy Sector Social Security Division

The Social Security Division is responsible for the administration of Social Security Legislation, which provides for the payment of benefits under the contributory and the non-contributory schemes.

These schemes cover the entire population which is in some way recipient of such benefits. The Division is mainly involved in ensuring that financial support is given to those sections of the community which are mostly in need, namely those with a low-income, the sick, the elderly and the unemployed.

The total expenditure on Social Security benefits in 2009 reached €661,128,310. This expenditure reflects an increase of €36,297,222 over the previous year.

LEGISLATION

Legal Notice 143 of 2009 provided for the increases in the rates of Social Security benefits and contributions as had previously been announced in the Budget Speech for 2009. These increases were proportionately tied to the €4.08 cost of living increase rise in wages as awarded by Government.

Act II of 2009 providing for the legislative changes as a result of the various changes to the Social Security Act arising out of the 2009 budget measures was published.

There was no increase in the capital resources means test of persons applying for Non-Contributory Benefits. Thus the capital limit for the entitlement of Age Pension, Social Assistance and Sickness Assistance remained €14,000 in the case of a single or a widowed person and €23,300 in the case of married persons. The capital limit in the case of applications for Medical Aids Grant also remained the same, at €9,320 in the case of a single or a widowed person and €16,310 in the case of married persons.

The Social Security contribution rate payable by employers and employees remained at 10% of the basic weekly wage, and the Social Security contribution rate payable by a self-occupied and a self-employed person remained at 15% of the income declared by the payer in the previous year.

NEW SOCIAL SECURITY MEASURES

As a result of the various measures taken in the 2009 Budget, the expenditure in social benefits during 2009 rose by €36,297,222 million over that for 2008. Amongst the important measures introduced during the year under review one finds:

- Pensioners in receipt of a social security pension were once again awarded the full cost of living as in the previous year with a 2/3 increase in the pension weekly rate and the remaining 1/3 paid as a cost of living bonus at the start of the year. Approximately 80,000 pensioners were entitled to this cost of living bonus.
- The amount of service pension not taken into consideration in the assessment process of a social security pension was increased from €466 to €666.
- Persons registering for work under the Part I register held by the Employment & Training Corporation and in receipt of unemployment assistance, who become engaged in voluntary community work or in any public work under a scheme announced by Government had their unemployment assistance increased to 75% of the national minimum wage.

CONTRIBUTORY SCHEME

The Department continued with its duty to determine questions of cases of insurability. It also continued to issue exemptions from payments of the social security contributions to those expatriates insured in their home countries and also paying their dues there.

The total revenue collected during 2009 in terms of the Social Security Act (Cap 318) amounted to €524,267,472. This reflects an increase of €14,124,807 over the previous year. These figures are broken down in detail in the following table:

Contributions and Enforcement			
Type of Contributions	2008	2009	+ or -
Class I Contributions in respect of Private Entities	229,344,658	239,554,908	10,210,250
Class I Contributions in respect of Government Employees	76,186.17	77,000,509	814,339
Class II Contributions by Self-Employed persons	34,407,009	34,039,849	-367,160
Further Contributions	235,909	207,571	-28,338
State Contribution	169,968,919	175,297,633	5,328,714
Total	510,142,665	526,100,470	15,957,805

Short-Term Benefits

During 2009, the Short Term Benefit Section in Gozo continued with the normal duties related to the issue of short-term benefits. Moreover staff at stagers managed to finalise the input of all the contribution histories mostly belonging to self-occupied contributors. As in the previous year, the Gozo Branch once again managed to issue the annual reviews of Supplementary Allowance claims on time. The total number of Supplementary Allowance claims reviewed amounted to 30,133, of which 27,519 were reviews to ascertain entitlement for year 2009/2010 and 2,614 claims pertained to late or change of status applications.

The Short Term Benefits Section also continued with the processing of Energy Benefit applications and a total of 2,714 were assessed and the relative vouchers issued accordingly. The section also issued 353 vouchers for Charitable Institutions and took action on 151 Benefit Fraud cases.

Claims for short-term benefits dealt with during 2009, as compared with 2008, are as shown hereunder:

Type of Benefit	Number of Claims			Type of Medical Certificate	2008	2009	(+) or (-)
	2008	2009	(+) or (-)				
Sickness Benefit	126,667	126,597	-70	First/Final (less than 4 days)	78,802	75,545	-3257
Unemployment Benefit	17,349	20,158	809	First/Final (4 to 6 days)	29,111	31,859	2748
Special Unemployment Benefit	878	1,078	200	First (open)	18,754	19,193	439
Injury Benefit	3,951	3,198	- 753	Intermediate	101,147	96,408	-4739
Marriage Grant	3,180	3,177	-3	Final	16,141	16,780	639
Total	152,025	152,025	2,183	Total	243,955	239,785	-4,170

Children's Allowances and Other Family Benefits

The following tables give an overview of the family allowances in payment at the end of 2009 compared to 2008 and the number of households in receipt of a Disabled Child Allowance and compare the number of accepted claims in respect of Maternity Benefit as at the end of 2008 and 2009.

During 2009 the Division reviewed all cases of Child Allowance that were in payment up to end of June 2008 with a view to establish the new Child Allowance Benefit rates for the year starting July 2009. The number of households in receipt of Children Allowance benefits on 31 December 2009 was 44,663 as compared to 45,188 households on 31 December 2008.

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Children Allowance for household with income less than €23,923	Number of Families		
	2008	2009	(+) or (-)
Child Allowance only:			
- One eligible child	15,158	14,561	(-) 597
- Two eligible children	9,910	9,059	(-) 851
- Three eligible children	2,486	2,168	(-) 318
- Four or more eligible children	665	606	(-) 59
Total	28,219	26,394	(-) 1,825

Children Allowance for household with income more than €23,923	Number of Families		
	2008	2009	(+) or (-)
Child Allowance only:			
- One eligible child	8,899	9,770	871
- Two eligible children	6,659	7,803	424
- Three eligible children	1,209	1,225	16
- Four or more eligible children	202	191	- 11
Total	16,969	18,269	1,300

Type of Benefit	2008	2009	(+) or (-)
Disabled Child Allowance	709	747	38
Maternity Benefit	2,687	2,615	-72
Total	3,396	3,362	-34

Contributory Pensions

The following table shows the number of persons in receipt of a Contributory Pension at the end of 2009. Here the upward trend in the number of pensioners, especially the new retirees continued with a net increase of 2.5% being recorded in the number of retirement pensioners over the previous year.

As a result of the budget speech for 2009 all pensioners were awarded the full cost of living increase. Thus two-thirds of the cost of living increase €2.72 was added to the weekly pension rate and the remaining one-third was given as a one time payment in advance for the whole year.

As in previous years the maximum pensionable income for Social Security purposes was once again increased by the cost of living allowance to reach the amount of €16,812.

Type of Benefit	Number of Pensioners		
	2008	2009	(+) or (-)
Retirement Pension	9,297	9,585	288
Increased Retirement Pension	2,146	1,918	-228
National Minimum Retirement Pension	8,022	8,404	382
Decreased National Minimum Pension	121	122	1
Increased National Minimum Ret. Pension	2,658	2,643	-15
Two-Thirds Pension	27,453	29,744	2,291
Invalidity Pension	1,351	1,084	-267
Increased Invalidity Pension	296	270	-26
National Minimum Invalidity Pension	6,640	6,014	-626
Decreased National Minimum Pension	121	21	-1
Widow's Pension with Service Pension	695	544	-151
National Minimum Widow's Pension	8,486	8,359	-127
Early Survivor's Pension	1,927	1,957	30
Survivor's Pension	4,806	5,209	403
Disablement Pension	347	334	-13
Orphan's Allowance	11	13	2
Total	74,377	76,221	1,943

Invalidity Pensions

The number of Invalidity Pension cases assessed and reviewed under the new system during 2009 amounted to 1,904 up to the end of the year. Of these, 665 were new cases while 1,239 were cases that had to be reviewed by the medical board.

Pension Reviews

During the period under review, the pensions section continued with the revisions of various pensioners in receipt of a service pension and in accordance with the budget measures for 2009 had the first €666 of their service pension ignored.

As a result of this second step in the service pension exercise, circa 5,000 pensioners (Retirement, Widow or Invalidity) saw an increase in their social security pension entitlement;

Revisions to contributory pensions (Retirement, Widows, and Invalidity) were also undertaken in connection with new collective agreements that came into effect during the said year. The number of revisions undertaken as a result of the above-mentioned exercises amounted to 32,963 with an expenditure of €5,750,654.

NON-CONTRIBUTORY SCHEME

The number of persons in receipt of non-contributory Age, Visually Impaired, Mentally/Severely Disabled, and Carer's Pension/Allowance paid under the Act was 7,475. There was a decrease of 0.99% when compared to the previous year in all the beneficiaries with the exception of those in receipt of a Pension for the Visually Impaired.

Type of Pension/Allowance	Beneficiaries		
	2008	2009	(+) or (-)
Old Age	4,883	4,874	-9
Visually Impaired	170	173	3
Mentally/Severely Disabled	2,261	2,249	-12
Carer's	205	179	-26
Total	7,519	7,475	-44

Assistances

Non-Contributory Benefits are granted to heads of household who are incapable of work, persons registered as unemployed, to carers of a relative on a full time basis; single unmarried parents, to aged persons who could not qualify to a contributory pension, to drug addicts undergoing a rehabilitation programme, to disabled persons and to persons who suffer from a chronic illness. There are also benefits in kind such as the issue of free medical aid. All these assistances are subject to a means test.

The following table shows the number of households benefiting from non-contributory Assistance paid under the Act. There was a marginal decrease in the number of beneficiaries of 0.98% as compared to the previous year. This decrease is mainly representative of beneficiaries in receipt of Sickness Assistance and Supplementary allowance.

During 2009, the Division carried out 7,249 financial investigations to determine the eligibility or otherwise to Free Medical Aid (another form of assistance in kind provided for under the Act), of which 7,502 were found to be eligible and were awarded Free Medical Aid accordingly. There were also 490 applications for the waiving off of the Matsec Examination O Level Fees, of which 485 had been accepted. During the same period, 27 applications for the waiving of Matsec Examination A level Fees, of which 21 were accepted. Furthermore there were 70 applications for exemption from the payment of Social Security Contributions.

Type of Assistance	Beneficiaries		
	2008	2009	(+) or (-)
Unemployment assistance	5,416	5,675	259
Social assistance *	11,246	11,350	104
Sickness assistance	14,332	14,079	-253
Milk Grant	191	192	1
Leprosy assistance	50	47	-3
Tuberculosis assistance	9	3	-6
Supplementary allowance	29,136	28,358	-805
Total	60,407	59,704	-703

Investigations

During the year under review, 497 cases, submitted by the Benefit Fraud Directorate, were considered and decided upon by the Division. 391 cases of these were new cases and 23 cases were reviews. From these cases, 220 benefit payments were suspended, 141 cases reviewed, whilst another 37 required further investigations by the Division. All the necessary work to recoup the benefits overpaid was carried out.

Further cases of investigations raised by the Benefit Fraud & Investigations Directorate during the year under review are still under consideration by the Division.

As reported in 2008, apart from the cases reviewed following investigations carried out by the Benefit Fraud and Investigations Directorate of the Ministry for Social Policy, the Division embarked upon an extensive and intensive exercise on the review of means-tested benefit cases. The objective was to increase the review of such cases to ensure that each case is reviewed at least annually. Although beneficiaries are duty bound to inform the Department of any change in their circumstances, and that every effort is made by the Division to obtain as much information as possible to ensure the timely adjustment of benefit entitlements as a result of changes in circumstances, there are still cases where clients fail to report changes of circumstances in time, either through carelessness or abusively.

This exercise was strengthened during 2009, and over 13,366 files of persons receiving non-contributory benefits were reviewed.

As a result of these reviews, a number of benefit rates were reviewed and a total amount of €1,072,145 was requested as refunds from beneficiaries who were overpaid as a result of the non-disclosure of certain changes in their circumstances which affected their benefit entitlement. This exercise has in fact resulted also in the decrease of €142,453 in recurrent expenditure on benefits resulting from the reduction or suspension of benefit payments.

STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS DIRECTORATE

The Strategic Development and International Relations Directorate was set up in April 2009. The Directorate consists of the newly set up Strategic Development Unit, the Customer Care Unit, the Division's District Offices and the International Relations Unit.

STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT UNIT

The Strategic Development Unit (SDU) commenced its operations within the Social Security Division in mid-2009. The purpose of this unit is to regenerate the Division by devising its strategic direction by synergising the work of internal and external stakeholders in developing policy measures, restructuring and reengineering the Division's operations, securing the required funds for the pre-planned policy and operational initiatives and monitoring the implementation and completion of such activities. The Unit in

fact has a statutory obligation to lead and deliver a range of projects, as well as providing a supporting role to other areas on key projects while monitoring projects which the Divisions undertakes.

Strategic Objectives

The key strategic objectives of this Unit (and consequently of the Division as well) are the continuous development of an effective legislative framework, the ongoing development of the Division's human resources primarily through training, the availability of information and tools to assist the employees of the Division, improving the quality of services and information provided and evaluating effectiveness of actions taken.

Business Plan

In 2009, the Unit was busy planning a number of projects which will be launched or undertaken in 2010 in line with the Government's programme to invest more in social security so that everybody can progress, to contribute towards the fight against fraud and abuse of social benefits, to maintain and develop a system of social security that evaluates who is the most in need in order to have a fair society, to improve the business processes of the Division and hence the service delivery, to improve the working environment and the Division's overall corporate image, and to meet national and EU legal obligations. The relevant Business Plan for 2010 was concluded in December and presented to the Ministry's Permanent Secretary for approval.

Evaluation of Telework

During the year, the SDU started an evaluation process of the impact of telework on the Division's operations. The Division, which was the pioneer in the introduction of telework in the public service, currently employs 43 teleworkers with several other pending applications. Hence the Unit sought to evaluate the impact of telework, not only on the operations of the Division and management in general, but also on the personal life of the teleworkers.

For this purpose, a questionnaire was distributed in May to the teleworkers who were so employed at that time. Through the responses received, the Unit has learned more on how telework is affecting the teleworkers' life at work and at home and on whether it is being useful for them to balance their work and home responsibilities. It also received numerous suggestions on how the whole telework system can be improved for the benefit of both teleworker and the Division. A presentation of these results was delivered in December.

Towards the end of the year, the SDU initiated the second stage of this evaluation process by distributing questionnaires to all its office workers (non-teleworkers) including middle managers. Through this questionnaire, the Unit aims to learn more on how telework is affecting office workers. The Unit will evaluate the responses received during the first quarter of 2010 when then a full presentation of the results received will be delivered and recommendations for improvement made to the top management of the Division which hopefully will derive more benefits from telework for the benefit of all concerned.

Quality Service Audits

Towards the end of the year, the SDU was in a position to start internal quality service audits of its processes. The first quality service report, which focused on the contributory pensions, was presented in December 2009. The scope of these audits is mainly to improve the Division's service delivery to the public and also its internal processes from the time an application for a benefit is submitted to when a final decision is taken.

The first report mentioned above is a result of a six-week audit exercise on Contributory Pension cases, which includes the Two-Thirds Pension, Retirement and Increased Retirement Pension, National Minimum

Retirement Pension, Widows and Survivors Pension, National Minimum Invalidation Pension, Invalidation and Increased Invalidation Pension cases. It contains details of the specific exercises carried out, findings, conclusions and recommendations for improvement.

The intention is to extend the quality service auditing also to the Short Term Benefits in the coming months thus covering all the Contributory Benefits with auditing carried out and reports submitted regularly during the year. It is envisaged that this quality service auditing is further extended to cover the non-contributory benefits as well.

Business Process Analysis

In November 2009, the SDU reached an agreement with the Management Efficiency Unit (MEU) within the Office of the Prime Minister for the implementation of a thorough Business Process Analysis. The main aim of this analysis is to review the Division's current combined activities in the delivery of services and information to its customers and make recommendations for change. Through this analysis, the Division aims to take stock of its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats with the ultimate aim of building a more dynamic, efficient and effective business-like organisation which translates into better value service for its customers. The MEU will carry out this Business Process Analysis of the Social Security Division in 2010.

Information and Data Protection office

The Freedom of Information Act will bring with it new obligations on the Division towards its customers. With this in mind, and also because the Division would like to improve its information delivery channels, an Information and Data Protection office was set up within the Unit in December 2009. The office houses within it the Information and the Data Protection officers who are working together in ensuring that the respective provisions of the Freedom of Information Act and the Data Protection Act are scrupulously implemented.

Besides, both these officers are working together to improve the main information delivery channels of the Division. The office has started a thorough revamp and updating exercise of its website which will be completed in 2010. It also started designing flyers and other literature containing information on the various social security benefits which it intends to publish also in 2010. It is envisaged that the website and the literature produced will continue to be regularly updated so that the information provided to the public is always correct and most up-to-date.

Internal training

Also in 2009, the Unit organised an intensive internal training programme for most of the Division's employees. The training programme focused on a number of social security benefits and also provided hands-on sessions on the SABS system. Through this training programme, which will continue in 2010, more than 2,300 man hours of training were delivered in total.



Customer Care and District Offices

In order to reach the goals laid down in its mission statement, the Social Security Division provides its services, apart from its Head Office in 38 Ordnance Street Valletta, also from 24 district offices spread around the Maltese Islands, 22 in Malta and two in Gozo. Through such an approach, the Division aims at reaching out to provide assistance and advice on social security matters in the community.

The district offices mentioned above are situated in the localities of Balzan, Birkirkara, Fgura, Hamrun, Luqa, Marsa, Mosta, Msida, Nadur, Naxxar, Paola, Qormi, Rabat, Sliema, Qawra, San Ġwann, Siggiewi, Valletta, Victoria, Vittoriosa, Żabbar, Żebbuġ, Żejtun, and Żurrieq. The work carried out at district office level mainly consists of dealing with customers' queries, filling in of applications for contributory and non-contributory benefits and pensions, and the registration under the Social Security Act of newly employed workers. The registration of unemployed persons is also carried out at district offices by means of finger reading machines except for Mosta and Vittoriosa where this service is available at the Employment & Training Corporation's premises within the same locality.

Expansion of the Access Concept

The District Offices of Qawra, Valletta and Vittoriosa are integrated in a complex under the name of ACCESS. The main aim of the Access Complex is to make it easier for the residents of that particular region to access a number of related services in an integrated manner (one-stop shop) comprising mainly of the Appoġġ Agency, the Social Security Division and the Employment & Training Corporation. This concept could expand to other regions in the future.



The newly refurbished District Office of Valletta re-opened its offices in 72, Melita Street in August. The offices now form part of the Access Complex similar to that of Birgu and Qawra. In line with the one-stop-shop approach adopted by Ministry, the Customer Care Unit of the Division has also moved into these same premises to further extend the services offered under the same roof.

New premises were also acquired in 2009 to house the Msida District Office in Valley Road while an agreement was reached with the Żejtun Local Council to temporarily move the Żejtun District Office to the Council's premises so that a full refurbishment programme is carried out in the District Office situated in Our Lady of Mercy Street. Both the new Msida and the refurbished Żejtun offices are envisaged to be opened in 2010. Corporate clothing was also introduced towards the end of the year for the Division's employees at the Valletta Access. It is envisaged that the corporate clothing of the Division will be also introduced for all the front desk employees within all the district offices in 2010.

Training for District Managers

As indicated in the Strategic Development Unit report above, during 2009 a training programme on social security benefits and hands-on sessions on the SABS system were delivered, amongst others, to all District Managers. The aim of this training, from the customer care perspective, is to improve our service and information delivery to the public. The District Managers received almost 1,100 man hours of training. The same training programme will be delivered to all front office staff at district offices in 2010. In addition district officers attended other training courses on various topics organised by SDO.

District Managers also participated in programmes aired on radio and television with the aim of promoting the services rendered by the Division in general and to make the general public more aware of the benefits/assistance emanating from the Social Security Act.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS UNIT

The Social Security Division continued to meet its international responsibilities, evolving from its commitments arising primarily from Malta's membership in the EU and from various bilateral agreements. During 2009 the International Relations Unit (IRU) completed several important tasks:

The TRESS National Conference and National Report

During the year, the IRU organised the fifth annual Malta National TRESS (Training and Reporting on European Social Security) Seminar, which was attended by both local and foreign experts in the field of social security, legal practitioners and also academics. This seminar is conducted in conjunction with the University of Ghent in Belgium and is co-financed by the EU Commission.



Professor József Hajdú from the University of Szeged in Hungary and Mr Jörg Tagger from the European Commission attended the seminar in Malta which was held on 13 May 2009 at The Victoria Hotel in Sliema. Following this seminar, the IRU compiled the 2009 TRESS Annual Malta National Report which was submitted in September 2009.

Revised European Social Charter Annual Report (Council of Europe)

As a signatory of the European Social Charter and of the recently Revised European Social Charter, Malta was requested to submit a report on the situation of Maltese legislation and practice in relation to selected articles of the Revised European Social Charter. The IRU was entrusted with the task of coordinating the submissions to the report among the various internal and external stakeholders. For the current year, the submissions were related mainly to Collective Labour Rights which fall under the competence of the Department of Industrial and Employment Relations. The report was submitted to the Committee in October 2009.

Preparation of a Bilateral Agreement with New Zealand

In view of the number of Maltese citizens who along the years emigrated to the New Zealand, Malta is in the process of signing a social security bilateral agreement with the afore-mentioned country. In so doing, Maltese persons who contributed both in the New Zealand's and in the Maltese social security schemes may, by virtue of this agreement, benefit from both sets of contributions, thus ensuring social justice for citizens who have worked in both countries. The IRU was involved in the drafting of the agreement and in seeking advice from the Attorney General's office. The IRU also identified a set of requirements in order to make the necessary amendments to the IT infrastructure to cater for this new agreement which is expected to enter into force shortly, pending some minor issues which still need to be sorted out with the New Zealand authorities.

Launch of the Life Certification and Data Exchange System

With the ever-increasing number of pensioners paid abroad, it was felt appropriate for a formal system of life certification be set up in line with the Division's strategic objectives to prevent fraud, error and possible abuse resulting in wasted effort and unnecessary expenses from overpayments. The IRU thus engaged in the task of designing a proper life certification and data exchange system so that every pensioner residing abroad and receiving a pension from Malta will receive a life certificate at least once a year. Apart from the design of the forms, the IRU was also entrusted with the task of devising the business process and liaison with MITA in order to devise an ad hoc IT infrastructure. It is envisaged that the system will be launched in May 2010.

Participation in Meetings Abroad

The field of Social Security has a more concrete scope when seen in a wider perspective. IRU staff members actively participated in several meetings held abroad, covering a wide spectrum of social security related issues. Thus, through its active participation, the issues and concerns of Malta, as a Member State of the EU were voiced. During the year under review, the IRU concluded successfully its participation in the Administrative Commission on Social Security for Migrant Workers and continued to attend regularly and participate in meetings of the Social Questions Working Party. The main theme of these meetings focused on the necessary measures to be taken by the Administrative Commission when the new EU social security coordination regulations enter into force (on 1 May 2010).

The IRU also represented Malta in a conference organised by the Swedish Presidency in Stockholm entitled *Conference on Modernised EU Social Security Preparation for the application of the new Regulations*, in Prague for the 50th Anniversary Conference of the European Coordination of Social Security and another one in Leuven (Belgium) organised by the European Institute for Social Security marking the 10 years Master of European Social Security. The IRU staff attended a series of thematic seminars organised by the DG Employment and Social Affairs of the European Commission in relation to the entry into force of the new social security regulations. Furthermore, the IRU staff also represented Malta in the annual Council of Europe meeting held in Zagreb in September 2009.

Meetings with foreign investors

Due to the fact that the determination of the applicable legislation of foreign nationals falls under the responsibility of the IRU, during the year this unit was involved in various meetings with foreign investors to discuss social security issues. The IRU staff carried out the necessary research and case analysis and the appropriate advice was given to the respective ministries involved regarding the insurability position of staff members engaged in the operations set up by these investors. IRU representatives were also involved in the Malta-Tunisia Joint Commission meetings in March.

Leading Delegation

The IRU staff was entrusted with the task of acting as leading delegation on a sensitive issue within the Administrative Commission on Social Security for Migrant Workers. In fact the Maltese delegation was assigned the role of leading delegation for ‘setting a minimum threshold for the amounts for which a request for recovery can be made’, emanating from Article 72b (3) of Regulation (EC) No 987/2009.

The role and responsibilities included supporting and assisting the Presidency in addressing the action in question, taking responsibility for the process, examining all the issues involved such as problems involved and time required, informally contacting those delegations which might have a particular experience in the issues involved, discussing preparatory work regularly with the Presidency and the Secretariat, and presenting in time a report outlining the necessary action and the results of the preparatory work, in order to start the discussion in the Administrative Commission, together with the Presidency, the European Commission and the other delegations from all the Member States. The task was successfully completed by the IRU in December 2009. The Maltese delegation was praised for the valuable work done and was assigned a new task for 2010.

Number of queries dealt with by the IRU

During 2009, the IRU front desk office experienced a considerable surge in the number of queries received. In fact, compared to the average of 5,000 queries received in the previous years, during 2009 the IRU received more than 8,000 queries from the general public by letter, fax, in person or mostly by e-mail. Apart from pension claims, the IRU is also responsible for all the benefits which fall under EU social security coordination regulations. During 2009, the IRU received 45 claims from jobseekers coming from other EU Member States who come to Malta to look for employment, whereas five Maltese jobseekers transferred their Maltese Unemployment Benefits entitlement to other EU Member States.

The IRU also provided information to the continuous flow of requests emanating from EU institutions and social security institutions in other Member States, ranging from clients’ personal information to requests for contribution records. The IRU continued strengthening its internal IT infrastructure and services in order to process claims and requests more efficiently thus offering a better service to our customers.

Number of new pension claims received by the IRU during year 2009

The incoming claims refer to the pension claims received by Malta from other countries whilst the outgoing claims refer to the number of Maltese residents claiming a foreign pension.

2009	Incoming	Outgoing
EU	185	137
Australia	499	298
Canada	142	141
Other	9	NIL
Total	835	576

APPEALS TO THE UMPIRE

The following table shows how the number of appeals that were up for one or more hearings during 2009 was dealt with as compared with the same figures for 2008:

Appeals	2008	2009
A. No of Appeals for hearing:		
(i) Brought forward from previous year	623	641
(ii) Lodged during the year	<u>1065</u> = <u>1,688</u>	<u>1,290</u> = <u>1,931</u>
B. No. of Appeals settled:		
(i) Decided against appellant	410	469
(ii) Decided in favour of appellant	36	27
(iii) Withdrawn by appellant	145	216
(iv) Cancelled	59	65
(v) Revoked by Division	289	247
(vi) <i>Sine Die</i>	5	8
(vii) Awaiting reply from appellant/Division	<u>103</u> = <u>1,047</u>	<u>118</u> = <u>1,150</u>
No. of Appeals still outstanding at end year	641	781

PAYMENTS

During 2009 the Department had to account for a total expenditure of approximately €667,181,310 (inclusive of administrative expenditure) but exclusive of the state contribution which on its own amounted to approximately €176,100,000.

The following table shows the expenditure on social security benefits payable under the Social Security Act, (Cap. 318) during 2008. This table comprises the contributory and the non-contributory benefits issued by the department.

Type of Benefit	2009
	€
Pensions in respect of Retirement	319,506,96431,
Pensions in respect of Invalidity	420,42897,690,5
Pensions in respect of Widowhood	88
Pensions in respect of Industrial Injuries	1,708,0443,480,0
Pensions in respect of Unemployment	8639,061,0932,1
Children's Allowance	71,2376,368,311
Maternity Benefit	51,891
Sickness Benefit	709,030
Orphan's Allowance	38,826,070
Marriage Grant	
Bonus	
Total (i)	540,993,742
Pensions in respect of Age/Visually Impaired	18,489,529
Pensions in respect of Disability	9,716,41860,545,
Social Assistance	858648,153
Disabled Child Allowance	16,430,0699,035,
Medical Assistance	7685,977,015
Bonus	
Supplementary Assistance	
Total (ii)	120,842,810
Grand Total (i) + (ii)	661,836,552

COMPUTERISATION PROGRAMS

Regular meetings were held between officers from the Social Security Division and Malta Information Technology Agency (MITA) to continue and enhance software of SABS (Sistema għal Benefiċċji Soċjali). This enabled the Division to continue and improve its services to the general public. Obviously it is an ongoing process with input from each side.

STAFF

During 2009, the staff complement of the Social Security Division decreased only by one person when compared to the complement at end 2008, including those members of staff seconded from IPSL:

	31.12.2008	31.12.2009
General Service Grades	234	233
Industrial/Messengerial	60	58
IPSL	18	20
Total	312	311

The staff at the Administration Section, the Computer Section, and the Reconciliation Section is shown in the returns of the Ministry for Social Policy. Of the staff referred to in the table above, 59 in the General Services Grade and three in the Industrial/Messengerial Grade were performing duties at the Social Security Department in Gozo.

IMPLEMENTATION OF FAMILY FRIENDLY MEASURES WITHIN THE DIVISION

The implementation of telework within the Division continued to grow in 2009. In fact by the end of the year a total of 43 employees (25 in Malta and 18 in Gozo), an increase of 35 employees from 2008, were employed in teleworking activities.

The predominance is one of female officers in telework with 30 females and only 13 male officers on teleworking activities. The work carried out by teleworkers varies from benefit assessments, customer care, policy evaluation and analysis. From the various overviews carried out by the sections heads under whose responsibility these officers operate, an improvement in output, motivation and skills has been experienced. As indicated earlier on in this report, an analysis of the impact of the system is being carried out by the Strategic Development Unit of the Division in order to identify areas where improvements can be made.

As reported last year, the work arrangements are discussed and agreed upon with the employee within the parameters of the guidelines set out by the MPO for such work. As has been highlighted in this report, the work entrusted has resulted in various benefits and cost savings for the organisation.

As the system continues to grow within the Division, experience shows that this flexible tool can be of benefit both to the organisation and to the employees and their family responsibilities. Teleworking proved to be an effective family-friendly measure where skilled human resources in the work force are retained and where their vital knowledge and experience is utilised to the benefit of the Division. At the same time the employee can experience a better work-life balance which results in greater motivation and participation on the tasks entrusted.

JOSEPH CAMILLERI
Director General (Social Security)

Social Policy Sector

Department for Social Welfare Standards

INTRODUCTION

The Department for Social Welfare Standards was established to function as the regulatory body in the social care sector. Over the past few years, the DSWS was working on building the necessary legal and organisational structures to carry out its duties. The DSWS placed people at the heart of regulation and works in close collaboration with stakeholders. It has been taking on new responsibilities and the work of the DSWS is making a tangible and welcome difference to the quality of social care in Malta in the sectors that it has started operating in. It aims to expand its services to all sectors of adult and child social care.

One of the main challenges that the Department for Social Welfare Standards faced during 2009 was that of capacity building. However, despite a reduced workforce and while waiting to have key posts filled, the work of the DSWS proceeded at a steady pace. The National Standards for Out-of-Home Child Care, the Model Policies and procedures for Out-of-Home Child Care, and the 10-year Strategic Plan for Out-of-Home Child Care were officially launched. Furthermore, work was commenced on two new areas of National Standards, that of Addictive Behaviour Services and Adoption Services. During this year, the DSWS further consolidated its Central Authority functions. The ERDF Aid Scheme for child day care centres was initiated and proceeded at a steady rate. The Phase One application for the Post-graduate Course in the Regulation of Social Care was submitted to the UOM in conjunction with the Department for Social Work and Social Policy of the UOM. A Review of Conservatorio Vincenzo Bugeia was carried out.

LEGAL OFFICE

Abduction cases

In 2009, the Legal Office dealt with seven cases under the Hague: requests for access, requests for the return of the minor and a request for the ascertainment of living conditions. Two outgoing cases with Germany were closed.

- *Incoming Cases*: Central Authority received a case from the Czech Republic regarding the ascertainment of living conditions under (EC) Regulation 2201/2003 (the Brussels II bis). CA also received two requests, one from France and one from Spain for the return of the minor children. The cases are in front of the courts of Malta.
- *Outgoing cases*: CA dealt with a case of retention of the minor in Scotland. Four left-behind fathers approached the CA but the cases were not pursued by the left-behind partner or else they were put on hold. The cases were: two with the UK, one with Poland and one with Australia. In these cases, applications for the return or for access were filled in by the CA but they were never forwarded to the foreign CA.

There were also three requests under article 41 of the Brussels II *bis* wherein the Maltese court issued a certificate for the enforcement and recognition of a judgment given in a Maltese court by a foreign court.

Adoptions

Amendments to the Adoption Administration Act of 2008

In April 2009, a judgement by the Court of Appeal decreed that the three years which married couples had to wait before they could apply for an adoption are discriminatory and unconstitutional. (*Debono vs Minister for Social Policy et*). Amendments to the Adoption Administration Act of 2008 and to Maltese adoption laws are being proposed in this respect..

MOU with Slovakia

Legal Office worked throughout 2009 towards the finalisation of a Memorandum of Understanding with Slovakia, which was signed in October 2009.

Furthermore, it also dealt with various problems which arose with the various countries that Malta deals with in adoptions. The Office was involved in helping solve a case with the Philippines involving a Maltese couple living in Korea, as well as a request by an adopted girl for a meeting with her natural mother in Romania.

Russian hosted children

Legal Office was involved in the issue of the Russian hosted children. Since April 2009, the Ministry has been working to get the children back to Malta through adoption procedures.

Draft Regulatory law

The draft regulatory law is to be discussed at Ministerial level.

MOU with Police

Legal Office held meetings with the legal office at the Police Headquarters to discuss various issues over which there could be enhanced cooperation between the two entities, namely in child abduction issues and with regard to police conduct certificates.

Draft policy on police conduct certificates

Legal office in conjunction with Assessment Unit has commenced work on a draft policy on the police conduct certificates required in assessments of child day care centres.

Services Directive

As Ministry representative on the Services Directive Transposition Working Group, legal office continued to monitor the progress of the schemes which fall under the Ministry for Social Policy, as well as completing the tables and reports requested by MFEI.

Legal Notice Hague Convention

Legal Office issued a legal notice under Chapter 410 of the Laws of Malta, by means of which Malta accepted the accession of the countries named therein to the Hague Convention and thus secured the entry into force between Malta and the countries listed.

ERDF

A legal officer was nominated project leader of the ERDF Scheme 136 for the Regeneration of child day centres in Malta in March 2009.

Conferences

- 16 March - Main speaker at a seminar organised by DSWS on the Hague Convention and the Brussels II bis, Chamber of Commerce, Valletta;
- 23-25 March - Participant and member of the Maltese delegation at the Third Malta Judicial Conference, St Julians.

ASSESSMENT UNIT

Site Visits for Suitability of Premises

Throughout the year, assessors from the Welfare Services Assessment Unit carried out 19 site visits to prospective child day care facilities to assess the suitability of premises. The assessors ensured that the site or the facility had the potential to be developed into a child day care centre and also assisted the service providers to comply with the standards. Thirteen of these visits were in connection with ERDF aid scheme.

Provisional registration

The assessors completed 46 assessment visits to child day care facilities. Once granted registration, the particulars of these facilities are published on the MSOC website. Furthermore, the parents sending their children to the registered facilities benefit from Tax Rebate (Article 14C of the Income Tax Act, Chapter 123 of the Laws of Malta). Registered facilities have the option to register as educational establishments, which would entitle them to be exempt from VAT.

Quality Indicators

The assessment team started developing the quality indicators on Standard 5 (Care, Learning and Play) of the National Standards for Child Day Care Facilities. These are near completion. Once finished the registered child care facilities will be assessed rigorously according to this standard.

Care Orders

WSAU coordinator vetted 19 care orders. Work included reviewing social reports and case conference minutes sent by Aġenzija Appoġġ, interviewing parents and others and compiling DSWS reports.

Travel Abroad

The following table shows the visits abroad by Department staff on official business:

Date	Country	Conferences/Meeting
14-16 Jan	Brussels, Belgium	Joint Conference E.U Commission – Hague Conference on Private International Law
18-20 Mar	Sofia, Bulgaria	Conference on the Current State & Perspective of the Development of Intercountry Adoptions in Bulgaria
5-7 Jul	Bratislava, Slovakia	Conclusion of a Bilateral Agreement for Intercountry Adoptions
14-17 Oct	Oslo, Norway	15 th Informal Working Meeting of Central Authorities for Intercountry Adoptions

RESEARCH AND STANDARDS DEVELOPMENTS UNIT (RSDU)

Standards and Model Policies and Procedures regarding Child Care

In February 2009, the Research Unit ended a nine-month consultation process on the Model Policies and Procedures for Out-Of-Home Child Care. Focus group sessions were held at DSWS premises in January

and February. In the same period, other sessions were held at the Kurja and at Dar tal-Providenza for persons who could not attend the sessions organised at DSWS.

In the months that followed, the unit published the Standards for Out-of-Home Child Care and a child friendly version of the document which is called *In Our Best Interest*. Each publication contains a version of the text in Maltese and in English.

On 4 November, the Unit organised a national conference to launch the National Standards (and the children's version), the Model Policies and Procedures for Out-of-home Child Care and the 10-year strategic plan for out-of-home child care. The conference was very well attended by stakeholders and the press. The Minister for Social Policy delivered the introductory speech of the conference.

Standard Development

Work commenced on the setting of standards in 2 new areas of social care, that of addictive behaviour and of adoption services.

Care Homes for People with Addictive Behaviour Problems/Care Adoption Agencies

The RSDU is in the process of developing a set of standards of care for care homes for people with addictive behaviour problems and a set of standards for adoption agencies. The selection of two working groups made up of a representation of key stakeholders, workers and professionals, and service users and/or ex-service users in the respective fields is underway. These working groups, which will be chaired by the Standards Development Officer within the DSWS, shall be responsible for the drawing up of the respective national standards. It is the philosophy of the DSWS to work in close collaboration with stakeholders, as this provides optimum results as is evident from the work that was carried out in the field of Out-of-Home Child Care.

The standards that were selected to be used as a base for this work are the respective Scottish National Care Standards in these areas. These were slightly adapted for this work and are being translated into Maltese. These texts will be used as a base for the respective Working Groups which will further adapt these standards to the local context. Two members of staff were selected to act as secretaries to these working groups and they are carrying out their duties in this respect.

Review of the Conservatorio Vincenzo Bugeia

The Department for Social Welfare Standards carried out a review of the care programmes of the Conservatorio Vincenzo Bugeia (CVB) residential care homes Program Fejda and Jeanne Antide Home. The terms of reference for this review, prepared by the Director of the Department, specified that attention was to be focused on the following:

- Content and evaluation of the therapeutic programme and its link with the mission, aims and objectives
- Planning of activities on a daily basis as part of the therapeutic programme
- Review of the Manual of Policies and Procedures
- Qualifications, experience and training of staff
- Match of staffing levels with workload and case mix
- Review the system of formal and informal supervision of staff.

The data was collected by the Assessment Unit and the report was prepared by the Research and Standards Development Office and was completed in April 2009.

Sustainable integration and operation of Government/Church placements for minors

On 15 March, the Ministry for Social Policy set up a Core Group with the mandate to explore the possibility of sustainable integration and operation of government/church placements for minors and to make the necessary recommendations. The terms of reference of the Core Group were:

- To map and analyse the present situation of residential care for minors in Malta.
- To carry out a gap analysis of residential placements for minors in care over the next 10 years.
- To analyse and recommend a sustainable and feasible integrated service of residential placements for minors in Malta.
- To develop a ten-year feasible and sustainable strategic plan to provide and operate residential care for minors in Malta, including financial and resource implications of this plan.
- To recommend a feasible, sustainable and phased-out implementation of the ten-year strategy.

The group is composed of members representing the DSWS, Appogg, Ejjew Ghandi, and Salesians. The Core Group met the deadline to finalise the report by not later than 13 April, 2009. The 10-year strategic plan was presented to the Minister in July and was officially launched in November at the National Conference that launched the Standards and Model Policies for Out-of-home Child care.

The Core Group was asked to present pre-budget proposals related to the strategic plan. This was done and some of the proposals were taken on board.

University Course for Assessors/Inspectors in the Regulation of Care.

In conjunction with the University of Malta Social Work and Social Policy, the Stage one Proposal Form was drawn up for the application for a post-graduate course in the Regulation of Social Care. In January, the form was presented to the UOM Programme Validation Committee for approval and to be forwarded to Senate (and Council) for consideration. In December, the DSWS received confirmation of the approval of the Stage One Proposal Form and plans were drawn up for initiating work on Stage two Proposal Form in January 2010.

Conference - Legal Instruments and Judicial Networks in Child Abduction Cases

In February and March 2009, the research unit was in charge of the logistics for the conference in caption. The conference, held by the Legal Office, was entitled: *Legal Instruments and Judicial Networks in Child Abduction Cases (The Hague Convention)*.

ERDF I36 'Grant Schemes for Childcare Facilities - The Regeneration of Childcare in Malta'

The Department for Social Welfare Standards is administrating the aid scheme ERDF I36 '*Grant Schemes for Childcare Facilities - The Regeneration of Childcare in Malta*'. The main aim of the scheme is to help private sector organisations by providing them with financial support in the form of grants to introduce, relocate or upgrade childcare facilities that have the overall aim to facilitate integration of females into the workforce and increase the female participation rate.

The first call was closed on 22 May 2009. Till now, nine organisations have benefited from the scheme, receiving a total amount € 226,559.

Administration and Finance Office

The duties effected by this office included the Department's accounts, vacation and sick leave records, registry, parliamentary questions, waste management, childcare freephone, attending meetings at the Treasury and Ministry for Social Policy, coordinating work with other entities housed within the building

for the installation of a new telephone system and liaising with same entities for the running and upkeep of the premises.

In the first quarter of the year, the Director was appointed as Permanent Secretary, Health, with the additional duties of Acting Director for this department due to the legal obligations as a Central Authority for Adoption and Child Abduction Cases.

Childcare Freephone

This office received 162 calls mostly related to childcare services available in Malta such as information on ERDF funds, child day care facilities details, complaints and requests for the setting up of new CDCFs.

Upkeep of Premises

The refurbishment of the east wing corridor and a meeting room with energy saving lighting and their redecoration were completed during 2009. The upgrading of the computer network system has been completed, while most of the work related with the installation of a new telephone system has been put in place.

Energy Efficiency Survey

The premises were deemed suitable by an engineer from MRRA for the installation of photovoltaic cells that will have the potential of generating 10 per cent of the electricity consumed.

Training

Training sessions and a conference related with Waste Management were attended by one of the clerical staff. A site visit to the Sant'Antnin Waste Recycling Plant was undertaken during March.

A seminar, organised by the ERDF Project Leader was held in May for the smooth uptake of the ERDF project titled *Grant Schemes for Childcare Facilities – The Regeneration of Childcare in Malta* part-financed by the EU under the European Regional Development Fund.

Update of Website

During the last quarter of 2009, a major update of the website was undertaken with the introduction of the National Standards for Out-Of-Home Child Care. Throughout the year, continual updates are carried out in connection with the Certificate of Provisional Registration for Child Day Care Facilities issued by the Department.

Malta Psychology Profession Board

The DSWS provides logistical support to the Malta Psychology Profession Board and the services of secretary to the said Board. The Board met 14 times during 2009.

Adoption Board

The Adoption board was first constituted in April 2009. The DSWS provides logistical support to this Board, which meets at the DSWS every month or sometimes even more frequently. Since it was constituted, the board met 17 times in total.

Non-Governmental Organisation Project Selection Committee (NGOPSC)

The Non-Government Organisation Project Selection Committee (NGOPSC) is appointed by the Minister for Social Policy to advise on the allocation of public funds to non-governmental organisations (NGOs) involved in the delivery of social welfare services in Malta and Gozo. In carrying out its mandate, the NGOPSC is expected to appraise the performance of recipient NGOs during the preceding year, evaluate project proposals for 2009 and make recommendations to the Minister. The NGOPSC also draws up draft agreements with NGOs and designs the methodology as to how outputs can be ascertained and measured.

The NGOPSC received 41 proposals for funding in all, of which 38 were for ongoing projects and seven were for new initiatives. The total requests for funding by these NGOs totalled €3,727,210 or €1,817,210 over the available budget. Thirty four (33) recommendations were presented to the Minister, including seven (7) new project proposals.

During the year, 41 on-site visits were made, during which a service audit was made. In addition, discussions as to the improvement and other matters were conducted.

DR KENNETH GRECH
A/Director (Social Welfare Standards)

Social Policy Sector

Benefit Fraud and Investigation Directorate

The Benefit Fraud and Investigation Directorate, which was established late in 2005, continued to focus its resources on investigating all reports of alleged abuse in Social Security benefits and on identifying new trends in social benefit abuse.

Sources of Information

As in previous years, the Directorate continued to receive reports on alleged social benefit fraud from two main sources - the general public and the Social Security Division (SSD). The general public has become more aware of the effective operations of the Directorate and has therefore submitted more reports, most of which are anonymous. These were received by phone, including the freephone (80072345), through e-mails, letters and other media. Staff from the SSD also continued to submit a substantial number of *Requests for Investigation* on the template that has been provided to them by the Directorate. The Directorate also takes the initiative to identify other sources/trends where benefit fraud is suspected. The Directorate regularly monitors closely all financial data that is uploaded on the SABS computer system operated by the Social Security Division. This data, which is obtained from the local financial institutions, is used to investigate and make recommendations to the SSD to suspend the claims of those beneficiaries of non-contributory means tested benefits, once financial means exceed the applicable financial scales. Further investigations are then conducted in those cases where claimants to such benefits register a sudden substantial increase in their financial assets.

Coordination

During the year, the Directorate continued to coordinate its operations with a number of government departments/entities and with the private sector in order to obtain information that is considered critical for the conclusion of its investigations.

Operations

During 2009, the Benefit Fraud and Investigation Directorate conducted, through its Inspectorate, 2,890 on-site inspections, an increase of 694 inspections or 31.6% over the previous year. The CVA system in Valletta continued to impact negatively on the number of on-site investigations that the Directorate needed to effect at short notice.

From the on-site inspections and from other investigations conducted by the Directorate, 2,569 cases were concluded. The operations of the Directorate during 2009 included also three specific exercises on social security beneficiaries performing out-sourcing work at two separate entities and on persons registering under Part I of the Unemployment Register held by the Employment and Training Corporation. From these, 656 cases were not considered to be in breach of the Social Security Act (Cap 318).

The Directorate recommended to the Social Security Division that the remaining 1,913 cases which were considered to be in breach of the provisions of the Act be suspended and that any resulting overpayments be collected. Action on the 706 cases evaluated by the SSD resulted in the suspension of a total of 1,088 social benefits as a number of these cases had more than one benefit in payment, as specified in the table

below. The estimated annual savings for 2009, collated from feedback received from the Social Security Division, totalled €3,789,178.

Suspended Benefits	
Invalidity Pension	5
Supplementary Allowance	85
Child Allowance	128
Sickness Assistance	192
Social Assistance	255
Unemployment Assistance	110
Age Pension	56
Social Assistance - Single Unmarried Parent	110
Social Assistance Carers	8
Carer's Pension	1
Injury Benefit	1
Disability Pensions	3
Special Unemployment Benefit	26
Energy Benefit	108
Total	1,088

Conclusion

By the end of 2009, the Directorate had only 258 cases pending investigation or conclusion.

During the period 2006-2009, the Benefit Fraud and Investigation Directorate concluded investigations on 6,897 cases of alleged social benefit fraud. From the feedback received from the Social Security Division on the cases referred to it, the Directorate contributed to savings estimated at €14,270,200. During the same period the Directorate, acting on the experience gained during its operations, recommended several amendments to the Social Security Act (Cap 318). The Directorate also identified and brought to the attention of the competent authorities data on non-performing overpayments that are recorded on the SABS system.

RAYMOND MUSCAT

Director (Benefit Fraud & Investigation)

Social Policy Sector

Department of Industrial & Employment Relations

Mission Statement

To protect the interests of workers holding employment contracts while, in a spirit of social partnership, actively promoting a healthy relationship, and to contribute towards stable industrial relations.

Functions

The principal functions of the Department of Industrial and Employment Relations are:

- providing effective machinery for the establishment of standard conditions of employment, in consultation with the social partners, and their eventual promulgation as legal instruments;
- providing the necessary monitoring and enforcement of employment conditions as established by law;
- regulating employment contracts in an equitable manner so as to ensure that rights and obligations pertaining to each party in the contract are observed;
- protecting workers whose employment relationship has been terminated by an employer;
- eliminating discriminatory practices;
- providing support services to the Industrial Tribunal, Wages Council, National Employment Authority, Guarantee Fund Administration Board, and Employment Relations Board;
- providing effective mediation and conciliation in order to reduce industrial actions and trade disputes;
- promoting good relationship between employers' and workers' representatives.

Department Structure

The Department operates within the framework of the Employment and Industrial Relations Act, Cap 452 of the Laws of Malta, which sets out the framework for the adoption of the EU Labour acquis and the responsibilities of the Director responsible for the implementation and enforcement of the Act and subsidiary legislation.

The DIER is composed of the following Units:

- *Director's Office*: responsible for the strategic overview of the Department's operations; proper functioning of the three divisions of the Department; registration of trade unions; provision of the machinery for the voluntary settlement of trade disputes in terms of the Act and promoting such settlement; preparation of draft employment legislation.
- *International Affairs and Research Branch*: allowing the Department to fulfil its role as the national focal point on issues relating to industrial and employment relations. This Branch is divided into two sections – International Relations and Research. The Internal Relations Section's main task is to coordinate closely with local associations or organisations which have a role to fulfil in protecting the interests of parties engaged under an employment contract; and maintaining contacts at the technical level with governments and other international bodies including the EU and ILO. The Research Section is responsible for library and archives, labour research and registration of trade unions. During 2009, this Section implemented the Department's initiative of drawing up and publishing nine different informational leaflets dealing with aspects of employment conditions. Such leaflets will be disseminated and distributed to the general public in 2010.
- *Enforcement Branch*: carrying out the core inspection functions of the Department. This section is staffed by inspectors working in two sections - Terminations and Inspectorate. The Terminations Section processes queries and investigates complaints of clients, primarily related to employees whose

employment has been terminated, whether of their own accord or by the employer and is also responsible for referral of cases to the Law Courts. The Inspectorate Section is responsible for monitoring conditions of employment and processing complaints of workers who are still in employment. This involves an ongoing programme of inspections to target particular sectors, or to investigate specific complaints. Complaints can be received directly from the person concerned, through correspondence or e-mail or even anonymously.

- *Administrative Branch*: providing administrative support services to the Department and to the Industrial Tribunal. Such services entail the administration of the department's budget, revenue and expenditure, issuance and adjustment of salaries, issuance of honoraria payments to ERB members and Tribunal chairpersons, administration of PMPs, progressions, allowances, the departmental inventory, supplies' stores etc. During 2009, this Branch, through its Green Focal Point, also oversaw environmental issues and promoted eco-friendly procedures within the DIER. Amongst others, such measures include the further use of energy-saving lighting, separation within offices of waste material, recycling of paper etc. Other tasks taken up by this Branch include the implementation of the Freedom of Information Act and a Better Regulation project to be implemented in 2010 aimed at reducing administrative burdens on businesses and the general public.

Human Resources Issues

During 2009, the DIER experienced a substantial staff turnover due to resignations, retirements or transfers to other departments. Although some of these have been replaced by new officers or departmental officials who returned from career breaks, the additions certainly do not compensate for the sharp shortfall in personnel experienced during 2008.

During the year, members of staff attended various courses organised by the Staff Development Organisation. These included Information Technology, Employment & Social Policy, and Training for Messengers courses.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Employment Relations

Inspectorate Section

The Inspectorate Section carried out 1,566 inspections throughout the year covering 33,986 employees, out of whom 3,082 were interviewed. During such inspections a total of 2,387 irregularities were observed.

Officials within this section dealt with an average of 18,561 enquiries regarding conditions of employment, both on the phone and through personal visits at the Office. Another 540 e-mails requesting information were received and answered with immediate effect. In most cases concerning outstanding dues and other irregularities in connection with contract of employment, rectification was effected through the Section officers' direct efforts. Other cases were followed up through court action. In this regard, a total of 39 monetary claims, amounting to €215,326.74 were issued whilst 65 cases, each possibly including a number of irregularities, were settled and another 55 unresolved cases were referred for legal action consideration.

The Inspectorate Section also processes Posted Workers Notifications. During 2009 a total of 299 notifications were received.

Terminations Section

Throughout the year, officials in the Terminations Section served a total of 307 claims against employers in Malta. The total amount for such claims was €714,424.20. Of these, 59 cases amounting to €55,867.09 were amicably settled out of Court, as a result of the direct efforts of officers within this Section. A

positive outcome in court action during 2009 resulted in the collection of €50,013.09, however these monies do not necessarily represent claims that originated in 2009. Twenty other cases, amounting to €19,492.77, were closed on request of the claimants.

184 requests were made to the police for prosecution. Court hearings in Malta totalled 457 cases. Nine appeals against Court judgements were made throughout 2009.

Employment Agencies

The number of licensed employment agencies at the end of December 2009 was 59. During the period under review, 46 employment agencies renewed their licence. Nine new employment agencies were granted a licence to operate as such while only one employment agency had its licence withdrawn.

The total amount received as licence fees amounted to €16,072.86. The Section also coordinated closely with local newspapers regarding employment adverts by providing lists of licensed employment agencies that are permitted to place advertisements in the local press.

Employment Relations Board

The Employment and Industrial Relations Act provides for the setting up of the Employment Relations Board. During 2009, the Board held five meetings and discussed various issues relating to employment and labour conditions and updates on maternity leave, parental leave, the Working Time Directive, temporary agency work, fixed-term work, part-time work and European Works Councils.

During these Board Meetings various draft legal notices prepared by the Department's officers and forwarded to the Board by the Minister responsible for industrial and employment relations, were also discussed and forwarded to the Minister for his consideration.

Following this consultation process, the following three legal notices were published:

- LN 376 of 2009 - Contracts of Service for a Fixed term (Amendment) Regulations, 2009
- LN 377 of 2009 - Wage Increase (Employees) National Standard Order, 2009
- LN 378 of 2009 - National Minimum Wage National Standard Order, 2009

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

Conciliations and the Settlement of Trade Disputes

The Department always strives to take an increasingly more proactive approach towards the settlement of trade disputes to the mutual satisfaction of both the enterprise and the union involved. This mediation in the field of industrial unrest has largely contributed towards an increasingly stable industrial climate, avoiding strikes and other costly forms of litigation. The Department intervened on 62 occasions throughout the year. Agreement was successfully reached in 55 cases while such agreement failed to be reached in only seven cases.

Industrial Tribunal

The Industrial Tribunal, which is an independent tribunal set up in terms of the Employment and Industrial Relations Act, hears and decides trade disputes referred to it by the Minister responsible for employment and industrial relations, at the request of either one, or both of the parties involved in a dispute. It also hears cases of alleged unfair dismissal, discrimination, harassment and different remuneration for work of equal value. Sessions of the Industrial Tribunal are held at the Courts of Law. The Department provides administrative support services for the Industrial Tribunal, to ensure its proper functioning.

Throughout 2009, 87 new cases of alleged unfair dismissals and two other cases of alleged discrimination/harassment/victimisation were received. Seven cases of trade disputes were also introduced.

The Tribunal disposed of 101 cases of alleged unfair dismissals, four cases of alleged discrimination/harassment/victimisation and seven cases referring to a Trade Dispute. The Tribunal also disposed of three cases introduced in terms of other provisions of the Employment and Industrial Relations Act.

There were 497 pending cases on 31 December 2009, of which 453 refer to alleged unfair dismissal.

Industrial Actions

During 2009, three strikes were recorded involving around 12,439 workers. These strike actions resulted in around 7,595 man days lost.

Collective Agreements

Article 5(2) of the Employment and Industrial Relations Act states that where conditions of employment are prescribed in a collective agreement, the employer is obliged to send to the Director of Industrial and Employment Relations an authenticated copy of said agreement, within fifteen days of signing. In accordance with this article, the following agreements between industrial establishments and trade unions were registered at the Department during 2009:

New Collective Agreements	7
Renewals/Extensions	25
Side Agreements/Addendums	2
Amendments	1

Registrar of Trade Unions

On 1 January 2009, there were 30 registered trade unions and 18 employers' associations. During this period, no trade unions and employers' associations were registered or cancelled. Thus, at the end of 2009, the Register of Trade Unions was still composed of 30 trade unions and 18 employers' associations.

Seven verification exercises for union recognition were carried out, all of which were conducted by interview.

Other Activities

Participation in Seminars, Conferences & Working Party Meetings Abroad

Department officials attended several conferences and seminars organised by various bodies, both local and abroad, including the following

- Between 3 and 19 June 2009, the Director led a tripartite delegation at the 98th Session of the ILO Conference in Geneva. The Minister for Social Policy attended and addressed this Conference. The Maltese delegation included a number of high-ranking officials from trade unions and employers' associations. The issues considered at this Conference included discussions on the elaboration of an autonomous Recommendation on HIV/AIDS in the world of work and gender equality at the heart of decent work. This year, special arrangements were made to include, as part of the Plenary Session, a Global Summit on Dealing with the Job Crisis. This Summit was addressed by several Heads of State and dealt with the employment and social policy consequences of the economic and financial crisis.
- Prior to the ILO Conference cited above, an official of the Department attended an EU Member States expert meeting in Brussels dedicated to prepare for the International Labour Conference as regards EU

coordination meetings, EU member states common positions on issues being discussed at the Conference etc.

- On 9th February, a department official, together with workers' and employers' representatives, attended the 8th Session of the ILO European Regional Meeting in Lisbon. During this meeting, participants discussed two reports, prepared by the Director General of the ILO regarding decent work and conditions of employment in Europe in the light of the financial crisis and regarding initiatives and activities undertaken by the ILO in Europe.
- Two meetings for Directors General responsible for Industrial Relations organised by DG for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities of the European Union Commission. During these meetings held in Stockholm and Madrid, participants shared information on recent developments regarding industrial relations in Member States. Discussions were also held on the Commission's Communication on common principles for sustainable recovery towards more and better jobs; the Working Time Directive and Maritime Labour Law issues.
- 80th Meeting held in Dublin, of the Governing Board of the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions and another meeting "Global recession: Europe's way out".
- 2nd Annual Legal Seminar of the European Labour Law Network entitled "Towards a new European Employment Relationship- Problems, Differences and Challenges across the European Union". This European network of legal experts in the field of labour law was established by the Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities and deals with both individual and collective rights and aspects. During this seminar, participants discussed a thematic report on the different aspects with reference to the employment relationship in the different Member States.
- An Informal Meeting in Prague for Ministers and Director-Generals for labour to discuss developments on the Working Time Directive.
- Three Conciliation Committees on the Working Time Directive.
- Three Expert Meetings of the Committee of experts on Posting of Workers. In these meetings there were exchanges between delegates on information and good practices on existing bilateral agreements and implementation and application issues of the Posting of Workers Directive were discussed.
- Two meetings of the Expert Group on Transnational Company Agreements. During these meetings, the latest developments and the implementation and dispute settlement in transnational company agreements were discussed. Presentations of research activities on the subject carried out by the ILO and the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions were also presented.
- An Expert Meeting concerning the Implementation of Directive 94/2008/EC on Protection of Employees in case of Insolvency. During this meeting delegates gave their feedback on the questionnaire prepared by the Commission on transnational situations and on the types of national insolvency proceedings falling within the scope of this Directive.
- A Meeting of the Expert Group on the Transposition of Directive 2008/104/EC on Temporary Agency Work. During this meeting, a general presentation of the Directive was given by the Commission and delegates gave feedback on the state of transposition of the Directive in their respective Member States.
- 1st Meeting of the Expert Group on Employee Involvement dedicated to the Implementation of Recast Directive 2009/38/EC on European Works Councils. During this meeting delegates discussed the principles and structures of the Directive and the main changes introduced by the recast Directive when compared to the Directive 94/45/EC. Each delegate also gave a presentation of the situation in each Member State.

Guarantee Fund Administration Board

The Employment and Industrial Relations Act (Cap. 452) and the Guarantee Fund Regulations provide for the setting up of the Guarantee Fund Administration Board. This Board is chaired by the Director

(Industrial and Employment Relations) and includes, among others, representatives of employees and employers. The Guarantee Fund is endowed with a fund to be utilised, at the Administration Board's discretion, to guarantee payment of valid claims for employees' outstanding wages when the Administration Board is satisfied that the employer has become insolvent.

During 2009, the Administration Board held one sitting where 18 claims were processed and the sum of €23,966.61 was paid out of the Fund. In accordance with Regulation 6(7) of the Guarantee Fund Regulations, an audit exercise by a qualified auditor was undertaken to review the Board's financial statements. To date, the balance of this fund stands at € 522,560.76.

Self-Employed (Loan) Scheme

The process of recouping funds from persons who had applied for, and benefited from, the Self-Employed Loan Scheme was continued. For the year under review, €5,664.29 were recovered. At the start of 2009, warning letters were issued to all defaulters who fell back on their payment of instalments of said loan scheme.

DR NOEL VELLA

Director (Industrial and Employment Relations)

**Ministry of Finance,
the Economy and Investment**



Department of Contracts

HUMAN RESOURCES

During 2009 the procedure for the appointment of a number of Procurement Managers, who are intended to strengthen the administrative capabilities of the department, resulted in four new recruits being posted in the EU Unit. This measure is being implemented in view of the increased administrative challenges brought about by the new allocated EU budget obtained by Malta under the Structural Funds 2007-2013.

Training on the Department's human resources was sustained as in previous years. A number of officials were afforded the opportunity of training abroad in public procurement. Two officials attended a course on the procurement procedure known as the *Competitive Dialogue* in the UK. Another two employees were detailed to represent the Department at the EU Public Procurement Learning Laboratory and obtained first-hand experience on various facets of public procurement practices in Europe. The Director Compliance obtained specialist training in Sweden on the introduction of *Green Procurement* in government tendering. Other officials were constantly afforded local training through courses organised by the Staff Development Organisation.

REFURBISHMENT WORKS

The Department has continued in its efforts to utilise all the possible office space available within the existing building premises. A store in Floriana, previously owned by the ex-Lotto Department, was converted into a modern archive. It includes a mobile shelving system in order to make maximum use of the space available.

Another building, also close to Notre Dame Ravelin, has been acquired and it is envisaged to cater for badly needed administrative office space at the Department. The refurbishment tender has been awarded and works on-site have commenced.

TRAINING FOR CONTRACTING AUTHORITIES, BENEFICIARIES AND ECONOMIC OPERATORS

Training, in collaboration with the Staff Development Organisation, on local legislation i.e. Legal Notices 177 and 178 of 2005 relating to Public Contracts Regulations, and Public Procurement of Entities operating in the Water, Energy, Transport and Postal Services Sectors Regulations, was carried out by means of an intensive six module seminar during November 2009. The training consisted of theoretical tutorials on the use of the regulations, the evaluation process, the appeal procedures available to economic operators and the correct use of specifications and terms of reference. Practical interactive sessions were organised during the seminar on the use of the specifically designed Department of Contracts tender documentation templates for works, services and supplies.

Similar training seminars were also carried out with the collaboration of the Planning and Priorities Coordination Division during August 2009. These seminars were specifically targeted for stakeholder recruits entrusted with the management of the new allocated EU budget obtained by Malta under the Structural Funds 2007-2013.

The Department also delivered a presentation during a seminar on the management and implementation of projects under the Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows programme organised in October as

well as during a seminar aimed at induction training for New Beneficiaries (NGOs) held in September 2009.

A new initiative was aimed at economic operators wherein, during December, the Department organised an information session for prospective bidders in which an overview of the tendering procedure was undertaken.

PUBLIC CONTRACTS REGULATIONS

Public procurement policy and practice are continually developing within the national as well as in the international sphere. In order to keep public procurement progressing on the same lines, the Department has drafted a number of amendments to the current legislation which are currently under review by ministry senior management.

In fact, in order to be in a position to advise the Government, senior officials actively participate in meetings organised by the Commission of the Advisory Committee on Public Contracts, the Working Group on e-Procurement and the Working Group on Public Procurement Statistics. In this way, as well as advising Government on proposed new legislation, the Department contributes to the development of public procurement methodologies adopted in the EU.

EUROPEAN UNION MATTERS

The EU Unit is responsible for the administration of all tenders which are fully or partially funded through EU funds, EEA Funds, EQUAL Community Programmes, EAGGF, External Borders Funds, Norwegian Funds, European Refugee Funds and other projects that are partly or fully funded through Community Funds. These operations, which include the vetting of tender documentation and publication thereof, are related to the procurement of supplies, services or works. Such tenders owe their origin to the Single Programming Document for the years 2007-2013.

The Structural Funds Programmes for Malta for 2004-2006 have been concluded. The Structural Funds Programmes for Malta 2007-2013 are currently progressing at a very fast rate with a large amount of tenders relating to projects funded under these funds being processed by the EU Unit.

A recent audit carried out by the firm Moore Stephens was carried out on behalf of the Commission, and the conclusions made by the auditors were overall quite favourable.

GENERAL CONTRACTS COMMITTEE

The General Contracts Committee held 96 sittings during which 1,213 contractual issues were considered. These issues ranged from pre-contractual matters, such as approval of clarifications to prospective bidders, to post-contractual ones involving approval of extra works/variations. Amongst these cases, the Committee evaluated reports and recommendations submitted by Contracting Authorities resulting in the issue of 164 Letters of Acceptance valued at €44.75 million and 22 Contracts signed valued at €46.65 million. The Committee deliberated on 29 objections emanating from appeals lodged against recommendations of award of contracts pertaining to departmental tenders.

PUBLIC CONTRACTS APPEALS BOARD

The Public Contracts Appeals Board is appointed by the Prime Minister to decide on objections lodged against the recommendations of the General Contracts Committee on the award of public contracts. During 2009, the Public Contracts Appeals Board held various sittings that dealt with 40 objections.

THE DEPARTMENT'S E-SERVICES

Following the introduction of a new Procurement Management System (PMS), the new website of the Department (<http://www.contracts.gov.mt>) was officially launched in January. A project funded through the EU Transition Funds (2005) Programme, this endeavour provides a more effective way with which tenders are administered and managed by the Department, and offers enhanced functionalities for economic operators. The website provides unrestricted access to procurement-related matters, such as information on the individual tenders (including a free preview version, the summary of tenders received, and the award), and the recommendations issued by the General Contracts Committee. Free registration further allows for the setting up of new tender alerts (dispatched via e-mail and/or SMS), provides access to purchase tender documents online, faster notification of new clarification notes, and for the receipt of alerts advising of changes in tender status.

Website usage statistics indicate that the new website was positively met. Figures from November 2008 (when the website was 'soft-launched') till December 2009 show a dramatic increase in total session held, hits, sessions, and page views. In October 2009, almost 849,000 hits were registered, and more than 7,500 pages per day were viewed on average.

During the year, 259 Maltese e-ID users and 185 foreign users were actively registered with the Department's e-services. Some 162 foreign users originated from the EU (the UK, Italy and Germany being the most common country of provenance), whilst another 23 came from outside the EU. The website has attracted registrations from countries such as Malaysia, South Korea, the United States and Australia.

Three hundred and thirty-six tenders were purchased from the website, for an aggregate value of €25,270. Over a period of 12 months, these figures account for 13.39% of the monetary value of sales affected and for 19.3% of the number of tender documents sold. The low usage of the e-services during the first quarter of the year mitigates these figures. Usage peaked considerably following the decision taken that, as of June 2009, tenders were only to be made available in digital format, doing away with the printing and distribution of hard copies from the Department's Sales Office.

The website also serves as a single point of reference for public procurers, who are able to view and download procurement-related circulars, guidance notes, tender templates and forms, as well as being directed to EU explanatory notes and policies amongst other matters.

The degree of the Department's new e-services can perhaps be gauged by perusing the European Commission's Benchmarking Report on eGovernment Services for 2009. A new indicator, eProcurement Availability Benchmark, has been measured for the first time on a comparable sample of 746 contracting authorities. Malta (with the Department's website being its main representation) performed strongly in this measurement, with the report stating "the top performers for the Availability Benchmark are a group of 4 countries: Estonia, Ireland, Malta and Luxemburg. In these countries, a strong proactive policy for eProcurement has succeeded in aligning availability and visibility for most contracting authorities."

GREEN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

In July 2009, on the initiative of the Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Investment (MFEI) following the appointment of MFEI's focal point on GPP, a cross departmental task force which includes representatives from the MFEI, the Department of Contracts, Malta Enterprise Ltd, Malta Standards Authority, the Ministry for Resources and Rural affairs, Office of the Prime Minister, the Malta Environmental and Planning Authority and the Malta Council for Science and Technology was set up.

The main objective of this task force is to assist in the compilation of a National Action Plan (NAP) on Green Public Procurement (GPP). The NAP will seek to adopt an incremental approach wherein public procurement actively contributes towards sustainable development in Malta whilst ensuring the least

possible adverse effects on our local supply market. It also aims to pave the way for local businesses to recognise the economic opportunities that environmental challenges bring about not only in our local market but also in the EU common market. In addition, the NAP will also determine how Malta will reflect the 50% GPP target set forth in the Communication that was also endorsed in the European Council on Public Procurement for a better environment (COM(2008)400 of 16 July 2008).

FRANCIS ATTARD

Director General (Contracts)

Value Added Tax Department

AIM

The principal aim of the Department is to ensure that the VAT revenue target set out in the annual Budget is attained, in line with the Government's policy of ensuring sound public finance and with the minimum cost and burden to registered persons.

REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE

Revenue

During 2009, gross revenue collected under the VAT Act 1998, the CET Act 1997 and the VAT Act 1994 was €539,821,467 compared to €554,023,468 in the previous year. Refund of excess credit paid out of revenue amounted to €85,815,880, resulting in a net revenue of €454,005,587 compared to €455,292,595 in the previous year. The relevant information is shown in the following table:

	VAT Act 1998 €	CET Act 1997 €	VAT Act 1994 €	Total €
Total Gross	539,217,558	235,592	368,317	539,821,467
Less Refunds	85,808,646	0	7,234	85,815,880
Total Net	453,408,912	235,592	361,083	454,005,587

ECO Contribution

The VAT Department is the competent authority for the administration and collection of ECO Contribution. During 2009 the amount collected from this contribution was €12,871,231.

e-Services

The Department collected €187,612 during 2009 from e-Services.

Outstanding Credits and Debits

As at the end of 2009, the Department had a net debit book balance on VAT (1998) of €334,864,427, after deducting outstanding taxpayers' credit. The realistic net balance is €28,285,695.

	VAT (1998) €	CET (1997) €	VAT (1994) €	Total €
Debit Balance	367,247,182	2,880,499	6,473,191	376,600,872
Outstanding credits	32,382,755	19,903	63,109	32,465,767
Net Balance	334,864,427	2,860,596	6,410,082	344,135,105
Outstanding Accounts				
Accounts with a balance as at end December 2009	25,537	1,063	1,416	28,016
Accounts with a balance as at end December 2008	23,319	1,096	1,448	25,863

Cost-Effectiveness

Total recurrent expenditure during 2009, excluding the contribution to the Tax Compliance Unit and the Fiscal Receipt Lottery, amounted to €4,645,408. Net revenue from VAT 1994, CET 1997 and VAT 1998 amounted to €454,005,587. Revenue from ECO Contribution was €12,871,231. Net total revenue collected amounted to €466,876,818. The cost effectiveness rate for 2009 was therefore 1c per euro of revenue compared to 1c in 2008.

Analysis and Control

An Analysis and Control Unit was set up in July in order to monitor the effectiveness of the operations at the Department. Its duties are to evaluate data submitted by registered persons, analyse credit control claims and results of investigations to upgrade parameters for the risk analysis system. The Unit would assist in the identification of cases for investigation by the TCU and the VAT Department and monitor and evaluate work performed. The Unit has to date reviewed 48 investigations carried out during the previous months and referred 28 for further or corrective action. The Unit has also filtered 10,101 credit claims for refunds by registered persons.

COLLECTION OF TAX ARREARS

Civil Procedures

A total of 91 cases were settled through Civil Court action, resulting in the collection of €9,204,420 of tax in arrears, as shown below:

	Demand Notices	Judicial Letters	Garnishee Orders/ Warrants of Seizure	Civil Cases Settled	Tax Collected €
Total	3,178	265	54	91	9,204,420

Operations and Enforcement

Audit Investigations

The number of audit investigations carried out by the Department during 2009 was 109, resulting in 72 provisional assessments of €2,284,707. There were 19 cases referred to the Tax Compliance Unit resulting in provisional assessments amounting to €435,937 and final assessments of €876,415. The Department also carried out 27 ECO contribution investigation cases and identified 10 defaulters resulting in assessments of €208,308.

Credit Controls

The Department concluded 393 credit controls. During 2009, the Department raised assessments totalling €9,723,630 from Audit Investigations and Credit Controls.

Validation of VAT Returns, Correction and others

The VAT returns are regularly validated for erroneous tax declarations. The following is a breakdown of the cases:

Type	Cases Concluded No	Final Assessments €
Validations	107	0
Corrections	711	133,306
Audit trail	334	-6241
Agreements	1	6118
Total	1,153	133,183

Compliance Rate

VAT returns continued to be issued regularly each month. The following table shows the returns issued and received during 2009. The overall compliance rate as on due date, expressed as the percentage of returns received over the number of returns issued, was 67.71%, increasing to 87.13% by end year.

	Returns Issued	Returns Received as on Due Date	Compliance Rate as on Due Date	Returns Received up to End of Year	Compliance Rate as at End of Year
Total	127,206	86,132	67.71%	110,838	87.13

Inspections

During the year, the inspectors of the VAT Department carried out a number of field inspections consisting of spot-check inspections and surveillance visits. A number of cases were referred for court action.

Throughout the same year, the majority of inspectors were assigned work connected with administrative tax enforcement and review of tax assessments. Six inspectors were regularly assigned duties to carry out inspection visits, supported by four Revenue Security Corps members carrying out limited inspection duties.

A task force consisting of members from the VAT Department, Customs Department and the Police has been set up to curb illicit trading in Malta. Persons have been arraigned in court as a result of this measure.

Objections

During 2009, a total of 1,300 objection letters concerning VAT issues and 138 objection letters concerning ECO Contribution were dealt with completely. As a result, the number of outstanding objections as at the end of the year was 205 and 41 respectively.

LEGAL ACTION

VAT Legislation

During 2009, there was only one amending Act – Act II of 2009 – An ACT to implement Budget measures for the financial year 2009 and other administrative measures. Its relevant part is PART X Articles 36 to 56. The following legal notices were published under the VAT Act 1998:

- LN 34/09 VAT (Second Schedule Amendment) Regulations, 2009;
- LN 86/09 VAT (Tenth Schedule Amendment) Regulations, 2009;
- LN 132/09 VAT (Fourteenth Schedule)(Amendment) Regulations, 2009;
- LN 133/09 VAT (Third Schedule)(Amendment) Regulations, 2009;
- LN 137/09 VAT (Sixth Schedule)(Part Three Amendment) Regulations, 2009;
- LN 234/09 VAT (Amendment of Fifth Schedule) Regulations, 2009;
- LN 235/09 VAT (Amendment of Eighth Schedule) Regulations, 2009;
- LN 357/09 VAT (Refund of VAT to Taxable Persons not Established in Malta), Regulations, 2009;
- LN 363/09 VAT (Recapitulative Statement of Intra-Community Transactions), Regulations, 2009;
- LN 364/09 VAT (Forms) Regulations, 2009.

Court Cases

Legal action was taken against taxpayers wherever it resulted that the VAT legislation was being abused. As a result, 268 cases involving failure to issue fiscal receipts were brought before the Court, of which 183 were decided on and 159 cases were found guilty. The latter were together fined a total of €137,501, whilst 24 cases were acquitted.

Another 2,494 new cases involved failure to submit tax returns. As a result, 513 cases were together fined €1,056,636 whilst 1,481 cases were withdrawn once the returns were duly submitted prior to the Court hearing. The relevant information is shown below:

	Involving Fiscal Receipts				Involving Tax Returns			
	Appointed	Fined		Acquitted	Appointed	Fined		Withdrawn
		No	€			No	€	
Total	268	159	137,501	24	2,494	513	1,056,636	1,481

Appeals

During 2009 the number of new appeals lodged with the VAT and CET Appeals Boards was 79. The Boards decided a total of 115 cases.

TAXPAYERS' REGISTRY

Registration and De-registration

During the year, 4,584 taxpayers were registered with the Department, bringing the total number of registered persons to 95,959. The current active registered taxpayers are 54,045, of which 33,820 are in Register A, 19,798 are in Register B and 427 are in Register C. The number of outstanding applications as at the end of the year was nil. During the same year, 3,089 new applications were received for de-registration. A total of 3,430 applications were processed completely.

OTHER MATTERS

Manual Fiscal Receipt Booklets

The number of fiscal receipt booklets distributed during 2009 was 64,093, resulting in a decrease of 1.19% over 2008.

Printed Booklets	65,630
Distributed Booklets	68,867
Returned Booklets	42,179

Fiscal Receipts Lottery

The Fiscal Receipts Lottery has continued to be run by the Public Lotteries Department. During 2009, an amount of €778,669 was paid as prize money.

Customer Service

Customer Service was also improved. The Department has improved communication with registered persons by upgrading its website and publishing information leaflets for registered persons informing them of changes in legislation. The Department has enhanced training to staff and upgraded its intranet, and is also analysing comments made by customers in order to improve the service.

e-Government

During the year, the Department continued to enhance its online services as part of the e-Government project.

Updating of Internet Website

Throughout 2009, the VAT Department has continually updated its website at www.vat.gov.mt. The website provides useful information on VAT for the general public, for traders and for tax professionals as well as online application for VAT registration and submission of VAT returns. The intranet site was also updated for the benefit of the VAT Department officials.

Legal Committee

The Legal Committee set up during 2005 continued to discuss the various changes proposed by the European Commission and the EU Council to the VAT Directive and which should be included in the Maltese VAT legislation. The committee also makes recommendations to the Inter-Ministerial Committee regarding these changes and also deals with certain cases of VAT interpretation. The legal committee is presided by the Commissioner of VAT.

Participation in EU Commission and Council Working Party meetings

The VAT Department participated actively in meetings held in Brussels. These meetings regarded the Working Party No 1, VAT Committee, SCAC Committee, Recovery Committee amongst others.

The Commissioner of VAT also participated in the Council Working Party on Tax Questions which discussed the technicalities of the proposed VAT Directives for approval by COREPER and ECOFIN.

Own Resources

The VAT Department completed the compilation of the VAT Statement on Own Resources in due time.

EU-related Matters

During 2009, the Department continued to compile questionnaires related to EU matters. Notwithstanding the fact that these commitments are increasing from year to year, the Department complies with such obligations in the prescribed time.

Fiscalis Programme

The VAT Department continued to participate in the Fiscalis Programme which is targeted to update officials from all member states on VAT issues. 21 officials from the Department participated in seminars, workshops, work visits and multilateral controls.

Six officials from the tax administrations of various Member States participated in a number of work visits in Malta.

Training

Training of staff was held both in-house and outside the Department.

JOSEPH SAMMUT
Director General (VAT)

Inland Revenue Department

Mission Statement

To collect taxes and social security contributions effectively and efficiently in order to ensure that all taxpayers and social security contributors pay their fair share, in accordance with relevant legislation; to provide the Ministry responsible for finance with guidance in enacting such legislation and to provide taxpayers and social security contributors with quality and timely service and to simplify procedures while minimising the cost of collection and the burden to taxpayers, in order to encourage compliance.

GENERAL

The projected targets for the Inland Revenue for 2009 were largely reached. Throughout the year, the Inland Revenue Department (IRD) sought to consolidate its function as administrator of the Income Tax Acts and the Capital Transfer Duty Acts, and also effectively enforce the collection of Social Security Contributions under the direction of the Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Investment.

Further to the consolidation of existing functions and responsibilities, the gradual integration process of the Inland Revenue Department and the Tax Compliance Unit (TCU) continues at a steady rate. The TCU will move to Floriana into one of the IRD's office blocks together with the Tax Audit Section, once the necessary refurbishment works underway are completed in early 2010.

In September the Government announced a scheme whereby individual taxpayers and companies were offered the opportunity to avail themselves of lower interests and penalties on the settlement of unpaid tax balances for years up to the year of assessment. The closing date of this scheme is 22 February 2010.

INCOME TAX

Technical Section

Legislation

Amendments to the Income Tax Acts and amendments/new enactments of subsidiary legislation under the Acts were made during the year to introduce various measures, including those mentioned in the Budget Speech for the year. The more noteworthy of these changes were effected to implement the following:

- introduction of amendments relating to transfers of immovable property and shares through the Budget Measures Implementation Act (Act II of 2009). Most of these amendments were targeted at reducing the opportunity to avoid tax through the loose interpretation of the provisions regulating roll-over relief, intra-group exemptions, restructuring exemptions and incorporation relief. These amendments also provide for the taxation of the transfer of shares, where the underlying intention is the transfer of immovable property represented by such shares. A new concept was also introduced, that is, the de-grouping charge, which brings to charge previously exempt transfers of immovable property between members of a group of companies when one of the parties in the transaction leaves the group through a transfer of shares;
- widening of the tax bands, thereby reducing the impact of tax on individuals;
- introduction of a new tax credit to encourage women who have had children to return to employment or to continue in employment;
- review and substantial lowering of the additional taxes regime (penalties and interest);

- double tax treaties with Ireland, Montenegro and the United Arab Emirates;
- introduction of a deduction to encourage persons studying in sectors needed by industry, namely through the 'My Potential' Scheme;
- launch of an initiative to offer taxpayers the opportunity to pay their tax balances due while being exempted from 90% of their additional taxes accrued.

The full list of Acts and Legal Notices concerning income tax issued during the year is as follows:

03/03/2009	LN 57/2009	Hosting of Students (Income Tax) (Amendment) Rules <i>residence-sharing deduction increased to €3500</i>
04/03/2009	Act II of 2009	Budget Measures Implementation Act 2009 <i>amendments to ITA and ITMA: including widening tax bands, reduction of interest, anti-abuse provisions to art 5 and 5A, etc</i>
10/03/2009	LN 62/2009	Double Taxation Relief (Taxes on Income) (Ireland) Order <i>provides for double tax relief with Ireland</i>
30/03/2009	LN 98/2009	Additional Tax Rules <i>substitutes the additional Tax schedule in the ITA, reducing all penalties</i>
30/03/2009	LN 99/2009	Double Taxation Relief (Taxes on Income) (UAE) Order <i>provides for double tax relief with the UAE</i>
07/04/2009	LN 104/2009	Tax Credit (Women Returning to Employment) (Amendment) Rules <i>implementation of budget 2009 measures re women returning to work after childbirth</i>
15/05/2009	GN378/2009	Second Board of Special Commissioners <i>appointment of BSC (board no 2) chairman and members</i>
16/06/2009	LN193/2009	Tax Credit (Women Returning to Employment) (Amendment) (No 2) Rules <i>amendment to allow an option for a full year's exemption</i>
04/09/2009	Exemption O	Exemption Order re Reduction of Penalties and Interest <i>reduces penalties and interest by 90% (subject to conditions)</i>
10/09/2009	LN243/2009	Deductions and Tax Credits (Relevant Qualifications for Industry) Rules <i>implementation of the My Potential scheme</i>
23/10/2009	LN301/2009	Donations (Sports and Culture) (Amendment) Rules <i>clarifies definition of sports organisation</i>
06/11/2009	Act XVII/2009	Various Financial Laws (Amendment) Act <i>includes amendment to 12(1)(d) of the ITA [exemption of pension funds income]</i>
13/11/2009	LN338/2009	Income Tax Exemption (Philanthropic Work) Notice <i>exempts 7 philanthropic organisations</i>
24/11/2009	LN343/2009	Double Taxation Relief (Taxes on Income) (Montenegro) Order <i>provides for double tax relief with Montenegro</i>
24/12/2009	LN368/2009	Finance Leasing (Amendment) Rules <i>minor amendment to exclude capping on cars</i>
24/12/2009	LN369/2009	Income Tax (Deductions) (Amendment) Rules <i>car capping increased to 14,000 euro</i>

Other Work

Throughout 2009, the Technical Section worked on two publications in its series on tax cases, namely, the Court of Appeal Cases Volume 6 and the Board of Special Commissioners Cases Volume 3. Furthermore, significant contributions were made with regard to the publication of a leaflet explaining the Reduction in Additional Tax Scheme, internally circulated memos and uploads onto the Department's website.

The Technical Section replied to a large number of technical queries received from other sections of the Department and the Ministry, as well as from tax practitioners, auditors, lawyers and the general public. It also served as a liaison for the Department with the Commonwealth Association of Tax Administrators. In addition, the Section actively participated in numerous meetings, consultations and departmental committees regarding a variety of initiatives, as well as in the training of staff.

Finally, ten complaints were received from the Ombudsman during the year, of which five have been successfully concluded so far. Four requests were received in connection with tax at source on payments to non-resident companies and these have been cleared. Twenty-one requests for exemption were received and examined.

Final Settlement System Tax

During 2009, employers submitted 8,532 Annual Reconciliation Statements (FS7s) and 39,516 Payee Statements (FS3s) in relation to years 1999 to 2009. From the above submissions, 91% related to 2009. All of this data was vetted, captured and reconciled by the Final Settlement System (FSS) Section. In addition, the FSS Section registered 383 resident taxpayers during the finalisation process, whilst a total of 4,010 non-residents were also registered in the same period.

The Section also processed 954 electronic lodgements, 1,196 (FS7s) web submissions and 247,796 electronic FS3s. Total electronic errors solved amounted to 220,945. A total of 5,920 adjustment forms were processed between June and December.

Enforcement

The FSS Section continued on an intensive enforcement programme. As of 31 December 2009, the number of defaulters stands at 1,115, whilst the compliance rate is 91.56%.

Enforcement exercises performed at the Computer Section

	Count	Value (€)
15-day Notice (Individuals/Corporate)	4,447	39,801,718
FSS/SSC Notices (Current Year - FS5's defaulters)	4,852	-
Year-by-Year (Default Tax Returns)	6,650	-
FS7 Defaulters Notice (Current Year)	9,684	-
FS7 Defaulters Notice (All Years Included)	1,408	-
FS7 Defaulters Notice (Claiming of Penalties)	2,022	-
FSS/SSC Employers Notices (All Balance claimed)	1,105	32,436,576
Legal Employers Default Notices (FSS/SSC)	3,787	104,532,824
FSS/SSC Notices (Balances due & missing FS7's)	1,049	17,532,823
Provisional Tax Enforcement	2,347	10,461,451
Legal Demand Notices (FSS/SSC)	472	8,471,669
Permanent Resident Annual Declarations	757	-
Reductions in Interest & Penalties Scheme	635	13,484,051
- Notifications to Return Defaulters	37,509	-
- Agreements Issued	46,884	-

These include the extraction of data models for the selection of cases and the actual issuing of relative letters.

Tax Returns and Non-filers

In 2009, the number of tax statements issued without the need for taxpayers to fill in and submit their annual tax return (known as 'non-filers') was 175,530. On the other hand, the number of tax returns generated was of 72,864.

Audits and Investigations

Throughout 2009, the tax audits and investigations performed by the Tax Audits Section and the Tax Compliance Unit resulted in assessments and adjustments that produced an increase in tax (income tax, VAT, duty) of €13,404,294.

e-Business Usage Statistics

Corporate Tax Return

	Y/A 2008	Ratio	Y/A 2009	Ratio
Returns filed electronically	16,327	82%	11,828	93%
Returns filed manually	3,558	18%	805	7%

*Values for year of assessment 2008 are for comparison and evaluation purposes only.

Individual Tax Return

	Y/A 2008	Ratio	Y/A 2009	Ratio
Returns filed electronically	456	0.75%	443	0.75%
Returns filed manually	61,665	99.25%	60,597	99.25%

Values for year of assessment 2008 are for comparison and evaluation purposes only.

FSS Services for Employers

	Basis 2007	Ratio	Basis 2008	Ratio
FS7's filed on web	1,381	12.1%	1,478	12.9%
FS7's filed through CD	706	6.2%	985	8.6%
FS7's filed manually	9,274	81.7%	8,980	78.5%

Electronic Payments

Year	e-PG (payments through IRD website)		Internet Banking		Total value
	Count	€	Count	€	€
2008	6,604	2,724,986	14,595	63,169,229	65,894,215
2009	6,291	2,939,064	16,465	79,068,961	82,008,025

Workflow Management System

The Workflow Management System manages and controls the workflow devolving on the various units of the Department. 84,647 work items were received and forwarded for processing of which 80,526 have been closed.

Companies

During 2009, the Companies Section cleared 1,806 years of assessment from the pre-Y/A 1999 objection backlog. New objections were filed against 212 years, leaving a balance of 1,542 years of assessment under contestation. The Companies Section also processes applications for changes in accounting dates and issues various certificates, mainly tax clearances with regard to the winding up of companies and residence certificates. Public relations relative to corporate taxpayers are carried out by this Section.

All manual, post-year of assessment 1999 tax returns are received and processed manually by the Data Processing Unit. This year electronic filing of company tax returns is expected to exceed the 83% mark of all filers. The exact take-up will be known at a later date as more returns are expected to be received by the extended deadline that closes in February 2010.

Objections

The number of pending objections with respect to individual taxpayers against one or more assessments at the start of 2009 stood at 3,836. Throughout 2009, the number of objections settled was of 2,833, leaving a pending balance of 1,003. As regards to staffware cases, the opening caseload for 2009 was of 322 cases,

and therefore, with 257 new cases being registered and 474 cases being settled, this left an overall end-of-year balance of 105 pending cases.

Board of Special Commissioners

The Board, which was appointed on 15 May 2009, held a total of 30 sittings. The number of cases pending before the Board at the end of 2009 stood at 110 of which 44 were filed during the year. From its appointment to year-end, the Board decided upon 14 cases and had 25 ceded.

Court of Appeal, Constitutional and Civil Court

The number of Court of Appeal cases concluded during 2009 was nine, and the balance at end of year was of two cases. One new case was presented before the Constitutional Court, which remained unresolved as at year-end. Two Civil Court cases were concluded during 2009 and there were no cases pending at the end of the year.

Revenue

Revenue from Income Tax during 2009 amounted to €719.2 million. Furthermore, the Department also collected €739.4 million in Social Security Contributions. The following table gives a breakdown of the revenue collected in 2009 under the various sources:

	Settlement Tax €	Final Settlement €	Provisional Tax €	Self-assessment €	Total €
Employees	6,434,717	214,095,711	13,180,166	8,816,924	242,527,517
Expatriates	382,627	0	5,286,709	3,201,777	8,871,113
Trade, Business, etc.	2,120,785	0	16,788,616	5,528,713	24,438,114
Companies	5,071,911	0	288,860,594	45,741,157	339,673,662
Capital Gains	0	0	66,844,460	0	66,844,460
15% Withholding tax	0	0	47,280,853	0	47,280,853
Others	3,739,063	0	4,104,592	1,963,958	9,807,614
Total	17,749,103	214,095,711	442,345,990	65,252,529	739,443,333

Cash Office Receipts

The number of receipts issued by the Cash Office (Floriana only) in respect of Income Tax and Social Security Contributions for 2009 was:

	No. of receipts	Value in €
Income Tax	246,305	525,203,201
Social Security Contributions	150,223	252,691,966

Enforcement

The Collection Section carried out judicial action on a number of individuals and companies to secure revenue. Defaulting taxpayers and/or employers were served with demand notices requesting settlement of outstanding tax. Various cases were concluded, while others were offered repayment plans, as shown below:

Enforcement Type	Count
Default Notices	13,471
Demand Notices	22,729
Judicial Letters	628
Garnishee Orders	4
Agreements	788
Total	37,620

During 2009, there were 95 court cases, 31 of which were concluded, whilst 64 are still pending. In total, 299 court sittings were attended. Besides the ordinary issuing of receipt adjustments, the Collection Section processed 3,376 requests for the renewals of work permits for expatriates.

Mutual Recovery of Tax

The collection section continued to take enforcement action and precautionary measures for the recovery of claims from EU member states as per directives 76/308 EEC and 2001/44/EC. Out of the 44 cases raised during the year, 16 were finalised.

Clearance Certificates

The Department issued 101 clearance certificates to companies (42), employers (44) and individuals (15) who bid for a tender in an EU country.

Outdoor Inspections

The services of the Revenue Security Corps (RSC) were regularly availed of to help the Department in its drive against tax evasion and for tax collection purposes. Outdoor inspections were carried out mainly to (a) identify cases of persons who failed to register as taxpayers; (b) ensure remittance by employers of FSS tax/SSC deducted from salaries; and (c) trace taxpayers who fail to claim assessments sent by Registered Mail. The duties carried out by the RSC during 2009 were 580 cash escorts, 838 FSS/SSC, and 186 enquiries for the Capital Transfer Duty Division.

Taxpayer Service

During 2009 the Department's Taxpayer Service Office (Help Desk):

- dealt with 31,980 personal encounters;
- registered 1,074 new taxpayers;
- reached 325 direct agreements for programmed tax payments;
- reached 502 agreements with employers for programmed payments of tax;
- amended 1,823 addresses;
- issued 22,595 Income Tax Returns.

IRD Call Centre

The Call Centre's main objective is to answer all incoming telephone and e-mail queries relating to taxation and social security contributions. Queries are made by all categories of taxpayers, that is, individuals, companies, employers and expatriates. The IRD Call Centre also receives general correspondence regarding changes to be made to the Taxpayers' Personal Index. During 2009, the IRD Call Centre replied to 114,863 telephone calls as against 90,561 in 2008; 9,779 e-mails (6,744 in 2008) and processed 3,208 letters of correspondence (3,168 in 2008).

Expenditure

The total recurrent expenditure, including emoluments and other operating expenses, was €5.5 million. The cost per €1 of income tax collected during 2009 stands at €0.008. When considering also the revenue collected from social security contributions, the cost per €1 of revenue collected from both sources goes down to €0.004.

Refunds

By the end of 2009, the total number of refunds issued was 35,073 amounting to €53,759,942.

Capital Gains Tax

The Capital Gains Tax Section deals with queries from professionals and taxpayers with regard to Capital Gains Tax. During the year, 772 requests for a permit in terms of rules 10(2) and 10(4) of LN 5/2005 were received. In total, 770 permits were issued, 21 were refused or cancelled, and there were an additional 114 permits which were reissued.

As regards permits in terms of Article 43(3), a total of 281 requests were received. Of these, 185 were authorised for a reduced rate while 60 applications were refused and six were cancelled or referred to another section. With regard to the correction of DDT1 forms referred to the Capital Gains Tax Section from the Cash Office, a total of 85 cases were received, of which 83 were resolved.

INTERNATIONAL TAX UNIT

Double Taxation Agreements

During 2009, the International Taxation Unit performed the following work related to double taxation agreements:

- publication of legal notices in connection with the double taxation agreements with Ireland, Montenegro and the United Arab Emirates;
- conclusion and signing of double taxation agreements with Georgia, Isle of Man, Jordan, Qatar and Serbia and a Protocol amending the double taxation agreement with Italy;
- negotiating and initialling of double taxation agreements with Georgia, India (new treaty), Jersey, Oman, Qatar and Saudi Arabia.

Other Work

During 2009 the International Tax Unit processed:

- 565 self-assessments;
- four new applications for Advance Revenue Rulings;
- six applications for renewals of Advance Revenue Rulings;
- 808 claims for refunds;
- 1,034 requests for certification of exemption from duty under the provisions of the Duty on Documents and Transfers Act;
- 89 exchanges of information with foreign tax authorities;
- 784 requests for registration of shareholders under the New Tax Regime.

Revenue

During the year, €131,000,000 were transferred to revenue from tax paid by companies dealt with at the International Tax Unit.

Other ITU Affairs

Members of the International Tax Unit attended 37 meetings in connection with the EU, one with the OECD and two in connection with the Peer Review Group of the Global Forum on Transparency and Exchange of Information on Tax Matters. Furthermore, members of the International Tax Unit took part in work related to new legislation on fine-tuning the New Tax Regime and on tax amendments concerning foundations. Finally, members of the ITU were involved in further work related to the computerisation of the process of the New Tax Regime, in particular on the registration of shareholders and of the refund claim form.

CAPITAL TRANSFER DUTY

Duty on Documents

During 2009, the Capital Transfer Duty Department examined 11,741 notarial deeds, out of which 4,518 cases were inspected by the Department's engineers. As a result, 3,853 original assessments were raised. During this same period 1,516 objections were filed and 387 revised claims were issued. Besides duty on the transfer of immovable property, revenue under this source included also the duty collected in respect of share transfers, insurance policies, bank credit cards and other duties payable on various documents. Total revenue collected from this source amounted to €78,220,861 (Duty on Documents). This included revenue in respect of *causa mortis* transmissions.

During the year, 2,716 *causa mortis* declarations were filed, out of which 367 declarations filed by notaries were referred to the Department's technical experts to verify the valuation of immovable properties declared therein. The number of *causa mortis* declarations processed during 2009 was of 3,162.

The Department receives and investigates a number of deficient returns. In fact, during the period, 2,091 claims were issued and 62 revised assessments were raised. During the same period, 95 objections were filed by transferees against the *causa mortis* claims, while 73 objections have been concluded.

Death and Donation Duty

The number of returns of chargeable transmissions filed during the period was 63, all of which were processed and no outstanding returns remain unassessed. Revenue collected, including prepayments on account and from arrears, totalled €36,266.

Acquisition of Immovable Property by Non-Residents

During 2009 the Department received 245 applications, of which 217 were issued.

Revenue

Total revenue collected by the Capital Transfer Duty branch was:

	€
Death and Donation Duty	36,266
Duty on Documents and Transfers	78,220,861
Fines & Late Fees	16,503
Fees on AIP Permits	56,906
Total	78,330,536

Preliminary Agreements

Promises of Sale are to be registered within 21 days from their completion whereby the transferee is obliged to pay in advance 20% of the amount chargeable under the Duty on Documents and Transfers Act. By the end of 2009 the Department registered a total of 7,938 Promise of Sale Agreements out of which 580 were registered in Gozo.

Monte di Pietà

The Monte di Pietà advances money on pledges of precious metals. Figures for 2009 are as follows:

Pledges accepted	1,731
Pledges redeemed	2,032

Money loaned	€184,417
Money repaid back	€216,522
Interest received	€21,979

The number of pledges remaining on hand as at end December 2009 was of 7,063 against which €695,414 had been advanced. Besides advancing money on pledges, the Monte di Pietà also holds regular Court deposits lodged for safe keeping. On 31 December, 2009 a total of 693 deposits were still held.

Assay and Valuations Office (Office of the Consul)

This Office regulates the marketing and distribution of precious metal articles and conducts also direct market surveillance by means of shop inspections. The price of gold and silver was regularly published in the Government Gazette. The number of articles assayed, weighed and valued as well as the number of inspections during the period is shown hereunder.

	Gold	Silver	Total
Articles received	226	5,701	5,927
Assays	407	212	619
Articles weighed and valued	593	0	593
Articles broken or of an inferior standard	0	1,608	1,608
Articles marked at lower standard than declared	0	0	0
Number of inspections			53

CARMEL CONTI
Commissioner of Inland Revenue

Customs Division

MANAGEMENT

Like its counterparts in the EU, during 2009 the Maltese Customs administration has faced new challenges to ensure the smooth flow of trade whilst applying the necessary controls to safeguard the health and safety of citizens and the financial interests of the Community. The achievement of these objectives required the striking of a correct balance between facilitation and enforcement. The main priority thrusts were: to improve delivery of services to clients, particularly the traders and manufacturers; to enhance control on inward and outward movement of goods, people and means of transport; to enforce legislation more effectively; to improve collection of revenue and the prevention of fraud; and to prevent the importation of illicit drugs and other prohibited goods. Customs functions continued to be streamlined in line with Government's commitment to the revised Lisbon agenda.

Through its considerable revenue generation capacity, the Customs Division has contributed in a significant manner to the national economy and also met its financial obligations to the European Community. This, notwithstanding the global economic recession during the year under review, which to a certain extent has also affected negatively the trade and economic activities of our country, and which consequently had a bearing on the financial results of the Division. On its part, according to its core values and sense of service, the Division undertook various initiatives to try to improve its efficiency and effectiveness and in other ways support the local and EU economy in facing up to the difficulties brought about by the recession. To this effect, a primary challenge for Customs now continues to be the upgrading of existing and introduction of new ICT systems that abet its processing and control functions.

CUSTOMS EU SPECIALIST

The Customs EU Specialist supported the senior management of the Division in all areas of operation where Community legislation or relations with EU institutions were significant. This function had three major aspects: coordination within the Division, liaison with outside entities and the production of substantive EU-related input. Issues requiring the intervention of the Customs EU Specialist ranged from routine tasks such as the compilation of regular returns required by the Commission, to policy-related work and applications for funding. Other work coordinated by the EU Specialist included the vetting of Maltese translations produced by EU institutions, the drafting of instruction notes (particularly for the Customs Union Working Party on Legislation and Policy), monitoring of issues brought before the General Rules Section of the Customs Code Committee, and the processing of ad hoc requests for information received from traders and traders' associations. EU Specialist has also been a member of the committee set up by the Division to administer the issue of AEO certificates, represented the Division on the Sanctions Monitoring Board and acted as the Division's Data Protection Officer and Freedom of Information Desk Officer.

ADMINISTRATION

Finance Branch

Total revenue generated by Customs activities in 2009 was €175,424,749 which, although constituting a €3,458,116 (or 1.9%) decrease as compared to the previous year, is considered to be quite satisfactory

considering the global recession climate that abounded. At €11,685,100, income from Import Duties (Traditional Own Resources) registered a €3,458,116 (or 22.8%) decrease compared to 2008. It should be noted that, according to set obligations, 75% of these import duties income were transferred to the EU, and the remaining 25% retained by Malta as administration fee. On the other hand, at €162,685,907, income from excise remained stable compared to the previous year, if anything, showing a slight increase of €54,233. Other Customs incomes, from licences, fines, fees, rent, service refunds, sale of items, and such like, totalled €1,053,732, which is a reduction of €153,605 (or 12.7%) on the previous year. A further €53,240,123 as VAT was collected by Customs on behalf of the VAT Department.

Accounts Section

During the year, resources were focused on improving the methods of revenue collection. Other primary roles undertaken included: the regular financial reporting to the Ministry as well as the Treasury; the expenditure control of the budget allocated to the Division; routine daily activities associated with money transfers and transactions, and the general accounting function. Discussions were also continued with Treasury about the proposed implementation of the SEPA.

Customs Debt Unit and Cash Office

The Customs Debt Unit continued to chase dues outstanding to Customs and to effect refunds due to traders, besides monitoring the deferred payment facilities granted to certain importing companies and managing bank guarantees. The main Cashier's office collected a total of €234,174,397 by way of taxes (import and excise duties and VAT) as well as fees, fines, store rent, proceeds from sales and other miscellaneous receipts.

Procurement and Stores Unit

A total of 1,259 Local Purchases Orders were committed during 2009. Six departmental tenders and numerous calls for quotations were issued, adjudicated and awarded. Several items, including office equipment and furniture, were repaired or replaced as necessary. Amongst others, counterfeit-money detectors were procured for the various money-receiving areas of Customs. Uniform items were procured and distributed to entitled staff members including, for the first time, special uniforms and winter jackets for truck-scanning and boat-crew personnel. Personal protective equipment and other health-and-safety related items were also procured whilst risk assessments and other health-and-safety initiatives were undertaken, especially with respect to the AH1N1 influenza pandemic. A Board of Survey was instigated for the disposal of obsolete and unserviceable inventory items.

Common Agricultural Policy Unit

This Unit has been in charge of approving import declarations subject to an agricultural licence (AGRIM) at the processing stage. The movement of certain agricultural goods was controlled under the transit procedure upon request of other member states for these to benefit from the export refund system. Records relating to the importation of wine as stipulated in EU regulations were also endorsed and maintained. Unit staff participated in various meetings with other local entities, including the MRRA Paying Agency and the Malta National Laboratory, and in various meetings on the CAP in Brussels. Regular liaison was kept with Customs laboratories of other Member States, especially Italy and Holland, in connection with the analysis of various commodities for their classification and application of the relative taxes.

Tariff Quota System Unit

A new computerised Quota System was introduced successfully at the start of 2009. A variety of quotas were requested, such as those regarding lamb from New Zealand, wine from South Africa, and oranges from Egypt. Regarding the latter, a few quota applications were given partial allocations while some others were refused because there was no balance at the time of application. During the year, the Tuna

quotas from Thailand were not opened, thus Maltese importers could not avail of this particular benefit. Manifest and Import System enquiries were solved to the satisfaction of traders and the general public. Anti-Dumping reports were regularly sent to the European Commission.

EU Programmes Unit

During 2009, a total of 360 participants attended 267 Customs-related events abroad. A Customs & Fiscalis conference on information sharing, a workshop on the harmonisation of Customs penalties, a Project Group meeting on valuation guidelines regarding transport costs, and a Working Group meeting on cash controls, were all held in Malta and attended by delegates from many EU Customs administrations. The 6th quadrilateral meeting between the Customs Heads of Malta, Italy, Greece and Cyprus, as well as the Annual European Conference of a major container-scanner manufacturer, were also held in Malta. Information received via the CIRCA system was disseminated, whilst financial records, now also including those Fiscalis events attended by Customs officials, were inputted into the ART system for real time monitoring by the Commission.

Secretariat Section

Rent and electricity bills were collected from 31 Bond Operators using the Customs Groupage Terminal at Hal Far and the Temporary Storage Bonds at Luqa. 192 new cases of incorrect declarations were dealt with, 175 current cases were settled and 10 were referred to the Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Investment. 12 applications were received and processed regarding the issue of Customs certificates and other misplaced documents. There were also 22 new post entries of which 15 were settled. 54 instances of garnishee orders or information requests by Law Courts were processed. Another 27 legal cases regarding arrears of revenue to Customs were in progress, of which three were concluded during the year. The Section's activities contributed to the collection of €410,519 in taxes and fines.

Human Resources Branch

Personnel Section

In 2009, two internal working groups, namely the Customs Website Auditing Board and the Customs New Web Portal Working Group, were set up to review and update the information available on the current website and complete the related business analysis and technical requirements respectively. The first phase of the new electronic attendance verification system was introduced, and preliminary preparations started on the new salaries program based on the DAKAR system. One employee died in service, two resigned, while another 17 employees retired on attaining pensionable age. New appointments of the Director (Enforcement), and Assistant Director (Processing) and five other positions were effected while promotions and progressions were processed in respect of 18 other officers. Family Friendly measures were availed of by 31 Customs employees during 2009 as follows: responsibility leave (1), career break (1), maternity (1) leave, parental leave (2), reduced hours (21) and telework (5). Disciplinary action was taken against two employees in terms of Regulation 19 of the PSC Disciplinary Regulations. Eight employees became newly entitled to a qualification allowance on attaining a University diploma or degree.

Health and Safety Unit

Customs undertook several initiatives and implemented measures regarding health and safety. Inspections were made and risk assessments prepared for various sections and their operations. H&S fact sheets, medical first-aid kits and personal protective equipment were widely distributed. A fire extinguishers and smoke detectors inventory exercise was performed. Several H&S related training courses were organised and delivered to Customs personnel, including on the handling of dangerous goods, addressing H&S risk perceptions, and H&S workers representatives. Various tasks were discussed and organised during meetings with the H&S officers and Workers Reps Testing, and engineer's certification and servicing of lifts and hoists at Customs premises were performed as required by law. Existing fire escape ladders were

also serviced. Several architect inspections were commissioned and building repairs undertaken, including regarding the concrete external columns of bonds at the Hal Far Groupage Terminal, the Annexe building part-roof replacement, and the Custom House boardroom balcony. Customs also moved out its administrative operations from the old Polverista building at Laboratory Wharf mainly due to safety concerns. Apart from organising the annual ordinary influenza immunisation to all Customs staff, the outbreak of the AH1N1 pandemic necessitated particular address by Customs. In this regard, close liaison was kept with the local and foreign health authorities, disinfectants and hand washing detergents were distributed to staff, detailed contingency plans were prepared, and briefing sessions held with all Section Heads and their deputies, H&S and trade union representatives, and minor staff. Customs also made good progress on a procedure to commission eye and eye sight tests for eligible staff in terms of LN 43/2002.

Green Initiatives

Monitoring reports were prepared regarding the performance of the PV system installed on the roof of the Administration Block of the Hal Far Groupage Terminal. An inventory of all water taps, lighting points and electrical appliances in all Customs building was prepared, the latter as part of an energy audit. The water meters and plumbing systems of all Customs premises were systematically checked for leaks and if necessary repaired or replaced. Low power consumption lights were procured and installed in some of the premises. A hazardous-waste collection policy in offices regarding batteries, toners and ink-cartridges, as well as the re-use of envelopes and one-side printed paper, was encouraged and implemented. Replaced batteries and engine oil of Customs cars services at the Customs garage were sent for recycling.

Maintenance Unit

Normal physical embellishment and improvements were carried out at the various Customs premises. The entry gate stone-pillars and supporting walls at the Hal Far Groupage Terminal were redone. Customs fire-alarm and security-alarm systems were serviced, in-house periodic maintenance has been undertaken with regard to certain mechanical and electrical equipment at Hal Far Groupage Terminal and Freeport Warehouse, and specialised tests and repairs by third parties were organised and monitored. The ground-floor area of the Airfreight building was renovated, and the electrical switchboards of the Customs area at Deep Water Quay and of Custom House rehauled. The operational condition of the Customs fleet of some 50 vehicles and of the Customs motorboat was also seen to. Several roof-membrane maintenance jobs were also effected.

Training Unit

The Training Unit organised 41 training courses totalling 99 sessions (mostly half-days). A total of 327 lecturing hours were delivered, 278 hours of which on courses to Customs staff and 49 hours on courses to Customs clients, e.g. traders, shipping agents and *burdnara*. Total training time received by participants was 3,158 hours. Of the 616 persons invited, a total of 520 (84%) actually attended. Ten in-house facilitators/trainers and 11 external trainers (of whom four were from local and seven from foreign organisations) conducted or were involved in these in-house courses. Induction courses were also held for new members by the staff at Customs to introduce them to their roles and responsibilities within this specialised work environment. Newly eligible senior clerks were trained and given experience in customs weighing duties. Cooperation was received from several external training entities and Customs benefited from their tailor-made programmes adapted for Customs specific needs. These external training entities were: Intracom, Blueprint Management System/CSM, Pfizer, British American Tobacco, Market Surveillance Directorate, OHSA, and the Civil Protection Department. 74 Customs employees attended a total of 94 SDO-organised courses, and a further 22 employees attended other external courses. All e-learning modules available to Customs from the EC and WCO were placed on the Customs Intranet where they are accessible to all employees. An e-learning training policy is being drawn up whilst an eLearning Portal was constructed and launched to promote and facilitate overall accessibility of all eLearning courses to all staff, by making them available through one single webpage linked through both the respective Intranet and Customs Electronic System (CES) Portals. Furthermore, Customs organised blended-learning

training in the classroom to all staff directly involved in the areas that are addressed by the corresponding e-modules. An internal evaluation exercise on the use of the EU eLearning courses was also undertaken.

Legal Section

This section compiled and issued 40 Letters to prosecute and 114 Seizure Notes. The former were all sent to the Commissioner of Police for further necessary action, whilst the latter were all sent to the offenders. Customs was involved in 873 court sittings, relating to 309 Civil and 464 Criminal. The latter include 14 sittings regarding Evasion of Duties involving 270 cases. Customs personnel were regularly required to assist Prosecution through the Attorney General's Office as well as to testify in practically all the cases. 24 Criminal and 10 Civil cases were decided during the year, and fines in favour of Government amounted to €91,876. Those decided have included seven cases, in the Magistrates' Court, where the offender was found guilty and given a suspended sentence. There were also 93 cases which were settled administratively out-of-court, in full or in part, as well as another two civil debt cases settled after court sentences. Total fines from all these cases amounted to €138,362, including taxes.

EXCISE AND SYSTEM CONTROLS

Local Producers, Traders and Service Providers

This Section controls authorised tax warehouse keepers who produce alcohol or tobacco products, excise warehouse keepers who sell duty-free goods, and traders that are not tax warehouse keepers. It is also responsible for the issue of excise control stamps to importers and manufacturers, as well as for payments of excise duty on mobile telephony services. All excise movements under duty suspension were monitored via the Administrative Accompanying Document (AAD) or the Internal Administrative Accompanying Document (IAAD). All traders were required to submit regular stock reports to Customs. During 2009 the section processed 34 applications for the status of Excise Registered Trader (ERT), of which seven are still being processed. There were also eight new applications from traders to act as tax warehouse keepers of which three are still under processing. Two of these applicants have requested to be authorised to produce alcoholic beverages and the other to import duty-free cigarettes. At present there were eight registered local producers of alcoholic beverages and wine, besides importers of wines and spirits. Three of these producers were situated in Gozo. With regard to importation of pure alcohol, a number of tax warehouse keepers are manufacturers of medicines which use a large amount of ethanol for end-products that are not subject to excise duty. Other importers sell the alcohol either to be used in hospitals or for analysis and research. As to breweries, only one company is producing local beer besides importing beer in bulk. During the year there were four producers of pipe tobacco and cigars, all of whom were also importers of roll-your-own tobacco for cigarettes, pipe tobacco and cigars. Another five tax warehouse keepers were importing and distributing cigarettes under duty suspension.

Tax Warehouses

This Unit controlled the tax warehouses of the Barriera Tax Warehouse Ltd (BTW) based at Barriera Stores, and of others located on private premises. Stock controls were performed, and statements were regularly checked on a monthly basis. There were 37 tax warehouses at BTW and 31 on private premises during 2009. One new tax warehouse keeper started operations from BWT, one ceased to operate, and another applied for the closure of the private warehouse. Two private tax warehouses merged with another existing private tax warehouse which now is operating under a new name. New applicants for tax warehouse keepers have been encouraged to operate from BTW.

Fuel Section

This Section monitored all fuel moved under duty suspension and ensured the proper payment of taxes and duty due on fuel released for consumption. The monitoring involved physical checks, satellite tracking as

well as recording of the quantities of fuels imported, blended or moved. Data was submitted to the Malta Resources Authority on all imports and exports and on all the internal transfers and movements carried out between tax warehouses. All importations were physically controlled while internal movements between tax warehouses were controlled via the IAAD and entry into the electronic database. Frequent inspections of tax warehouses and bunkering barges were made and fuel analysed to deter and detect illicit traffic. Liberalisation of the local fuel sector started to be implemented during the year and this Section therefore adopted the initial changes required to be able to manage efficiently within this new scenario.

Heating Gas Oil (Diesel) Rebates Unit

Since its creation in December 2008, this Unit has primarily been involved in monitoring this particular commodity, which is being distributed solely for heating purposes. The green-marked heating gas oil must have a sulphur content not exceeding 0.1% sulphur. Currently it is being distributed by 15 jobbers or hawkers. Besides its use for catering establishments, bakers, garages (for spraying purposes), industries and farms, it also has domestic uses. The Unit monitored all uplifts from Enemalta and another authorised supplier, and performed regular on-site inspections to various end users, using risk awareness principles. During 2009, several such inspections were performed and the Unit was quite successful in detecting a substantial number of abusers, leading to legal procedures against them.

Excise Liaison Office

This office dealt with maintaining and updating the Community's System for Exchange of Excise Data (SEED) database, covering all the excise registered traders, tax warehouse keepers and tax warehouses. It was also responsible for monitoring four mailboxes regarding: SEED, Early Warning System for Excise (EWSE), Movement Verification System (MVS), as well as about the Excise Liaison Office (ELO). The Excise Movement Control System (EMCS) has also been envisaged to be eventually fully monitored and maintained by this office. The Excise Liaison Office liaised with its counterparts in all Member States and took an active part during the Excise Committee Working Party meetings. It has also been responsible for the related National Project Plan as well as the monthly development plans.

Computer Section

During 2009, the following IT projects, all forming part of the EU Multi-Annual Strategic Programme (MASP) were discussed, developed, upgraded and in some cases implemented in full or in part: Economic Operator System (EOS), Export Control System (ECS) Phase 2, Import Control System (ICS) Phase 1, New Risk Management Module (CRMS), New Computerised Transit System (NCTS) Phase 4, Excise Movement Control System (EMCS), Single Administrative Document (SAD) reform, TARIC 3, Automated Import System (AIS), Automated Export System (AES), European Customs Information Portal (ECIP), Single Electronic Access Point (SEAP), Single Window (SW), Registered Exporters Exchange (REX) and the new Customs Website. Many of those projects not already deployed shall be thus rendered operational in 2010. Necessary upgrading was also effected to Malta Customs international gateway through the EU Common Customs Network (CCN) and Common Software Interface (CSI) which provide the necessary EU-wide interoperability between customs systems. Besides the responsibility for the administration of the Customs Electronic System (CES), other specialised IT demands on this Section emanated from various EU acts such as the Modernised Customs Code (Regulation 450/2008) and Decision 70/2008 on a paperless environment for both customs and trade.

IT Section

This Section dealt with all hardware issues as well as networks, PC-related software and customs

user support and services. It also updated and uploaded the information on the Customs website. Besides routine operations, the major tasks undertaken during 2009 were the introduction of 190 new computers in

the Division under the government leasing agreement, provision of support regarding the relocation of certain Customs sections, and the repair of several PCs.

Transit and Free Zones

The New Computerised Transit System (NCTS) underwent a major upgrade that incorporated additional functionalities related to the transit enquiry and recovery procedures. The upgrade required extensive conformance testing of the new installation in line with the technical parameters set by the European Commission. Besides technical support from MITA, further support was provided by an overseas contractor through a collaborative contract shared with three other national administrations for the future development and implementation of NCTS. Malta has made effective use of the contract through its participation in a Change Management Board that decided on common change requests and the sharing of system development costs. Overall performance of the NCTS system remained sufficiently stable, with overall system availability staying within Community targets. 81 transit movements were opened by Malta as country of departure, whereas 1,603 movements were handled by Malta as destination country. A liaison visit by European Commission officials reported positively about the establishment and motivation of the Maltese project teams on electronic customs and their response to technical challenges. Control of stocks at the free warehouses was carried out on the basis of documented records.

Customs Warehousing

This Unit is responsible for the monitoring of non-EU warehoused goods subject to import duty and/or VAT, and their eventual release or export from approved customs public and private warehouses. 223 containers were warehoused during 2009. Four new customs warehouses were approved whilst two ceased to operate. A total of 1,887 new non-EU vehicles were warehoused, 1,840 units were released for home use, whilst 114 units were shipped to other EU member states after payment of the relative duty. Revenue from new vehicles amounted to €1,347,598 import duty and €2,464,072 VAT. 92 second-hand vehicles were released for home use on which € 74,162 import duty and €115,174 VAT were collected. €443,505 import duty and €88,195 VAT were collected from other goods released from customs warehouses. With regard to the Newport Bonded Stores operating under this Unit, rent collected from goods released from these stores and from transfer in bonds amounted to €2,165 and €3,483 respectively, whilst import duty, excise duty and VAT collected together totalled €15,265. There were two lots received for safe custody whilst one lot was released from safe custody. Two auction sales were held in 2009, the total income derived from which amounted to €45,268.

COMPLIANCE

The Compliance Directorate has continued to adopt procedures and working methods that allow it to apply effective controls without hampering the movement of goods. The greater application of risk management principles was critical for effective targeting of controls to be applied. Risk profiles were continuously monitored and updated throughout the year. Information continued to be exchanged with internal and external sources that provide guidance on the levels of risk. Dialogue with all stakeholders involved in the supply chain was another factor that enabled achievement of the right balance between trade facilitation and controls. Regular meetings were held with regulatory bodies and Government agencies to ensure that goods which did not comply with their requirements were not released for free circulation. An Memorandum of Understanding was signed with the Plant Health Department, and training seminars for customs employees were held by MSA (Malta Standards Authority) on a new Regulation (EC) 765/08 on product safety and market surveillance. The implementation of the AEO (Authorised Economic Operator) programme continued throughout 2009 and, so far, four traders have been granted this AEO status, which signifies that the holder is a reliable trading partner for Customs and is recognised as such by the customs administrations of all 27 EU Member States. An information seminar on the AEO programme was organised at the Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Industry in collaboration with the Malta Business Bureau. The Directorate also took part in the European SME week held in May 2009. Information leaflets

on specific customs procedures were prepared, both for those who were already in commercial activities as well as for those interested in starting a new business. A presentation was also given during the Malta Standards Authority annual General Conference on Customs Cooperation in Market Surveillance held in December 2009.

Processing Services

A marked improvement was registered in risk management, export facilitation and enhanced pre-physical control documentary checks. The introduction of more thorough, pre-physical check documentary controls enabled traders to comply fully with import regulations prior to the actual physical control of goods, thus reducing the risk of delayed release from Customs. Queuing time was reduced for approved traders and clearing agents presenting status documents in respect of intra community goods. Through this trade facilitation measure, status documents (T2Ls and certified invoices) are presented at the Verification Unit where a Gate Pass is immediately issued and submitted documents processed at a later stage. There was also a marked improvement in cooperation with Risk Management as well as the operational stations and the Post Clearance Audit Unit. The appointment of a new Customs Analyst strengthened the Department's classification competence.

Verification Unit

The year 2009 saw two significant changes in procedures that were introduced for this Unit, intended to improve efficiency both to customs and traders. One related to the procedure for the processing of T2L documents for EU goods and the method used to collect non-EU documents retained for post-clearance documentary checks. Copies of supporting documents in respect of full-load containers at Hal Far Groupage released not selected for control are now being submitted prior to the actual release of the goods. As a result, 8368 declarations of non-EU imports were scrutinised for fiscal and non-fiscal offences or irregularities, resulting in the recovery of €40,619 in post entries. The other procedural change indicated related to the verification of Intra Community documents for shipments despatched from Malta Freeport. Whereas in previous years these documents were checked before the issue of the gate pass, now the gate pass is being issued against a copy of the documents which are submitted for the post clearance documentary check. 13,000 such T2L documents were thus presented and checked.

Valuation Section

This Section advised Customs management, other Customs sections, the business community and private individuals about the value of commodities, based primarily on WTO agreements to this effect. Items were especially referred to this Section by the Enforcement Section, mainly relating to contraband cigarettes, spirits and fuel. Valuation staff also represented Customs in court cases relating to such instances.

Binding Tariff Information Unit (BTI)

During 2009, 19 Binding Tariff Information applications were received. All were published in the EU EBTI-3 database, 10 of them were processed and the relative BTIs issued accordingly. Various communications concerning regulations and notices on the uniform application of the Combined Nomenclature and classification decisions on various products were circulated among Customs staff, following their publication in the EU Official Journal. During the year, the operations of this Unit were audited by Commission officials during a two-day monitoring visit. This audit enabled the Commission and other Member States to obtain first-hand information from Unit officials using the EBTI-3 system and other compatible local systems, and enabled the Commission to take note of difficulties and suggest improvements which may be adopted for improvements. Officials from the Unit participated in a number of meetings in Brussels covering different related sectors of the Customs Code Committee, such as the BTI, Textile, Combined Nomenclature, HS/WCO Coordination and Mechanical/Miscellaneous Sectors.

Customs Analyst

Some 160 samples were referred by various Customs processing sections for the determination of the HS classification regarding chemical or pharmaceutical imports. Advice was imparted to other governmental entities (e.g. VAT) as well as to third parties. Analytical work was carried out on nine samples for alcohol content and six for decitex. Other samples were sent for analysis to Italian and Dutch Customs laboratories.

Customs Economic Procedures Unit (CEPU)

The Unit assessed and authorised requests for special procedures from traders and manufacturing concerns. During the year under review, it authorised 397 requests for various Preferential Customs Procedure Codes and activated them in the Business Registry. In order to follow up and monitor these authorised traders, CEPU officials regularly visited traders' premises and held meetings whenever it was felt that modification or clarification of the procedures was warranted. 2,982 T2L Status Documents and 79 claims for refund of import duty paid under the Drawback System and 90 transit documents were processed. 81 T1 transit documents were created and 73 movements written off and settled. 31 newly created Temporary Importation declarations were registered and 17 settled. 379 EUR1, 9 EUR-MED, 125 ATR and 95 GSP-Form A certificates were also issued. 18,435 export declarations were submitted to Customs, of which 15,936 (86%) were directly inputted electronically by authorised traders and clearing agents from their own premises, with the rest submitted manually on the Single Administrative Document to be inputted by Customs data operators. As a result of enhancements to the electronic Export Control System, data can now be transferred automatically through an interface without having to be re-entered into the system.

Binding Origin Information Unit (BOI)

This Unit classified goods at the request of traders, customs clearance agents and releasing officers at time of release or documentary checks. Queries were sometimes received directly from other EU Member States, which is a widespread practice employed by practically all Member States so as to rapidly obtain a second opinion, thus eliminating the need to pursue the matter further with the Commission. In 2009, 27 requests for verification were submitted to third countries regarding trade-related certificates provided to Malta Customs, nine of which turned out to be incorrect or false. In the case of another two, although the certificates of origin were correct and authentic, the invoice presented to Customs at time of importation was undervalued. One referral by Malta Customs was then included in SMS database of the Commission. Some EUR1 certificates issued in two particular non-EU countries resulted to be technically incorrect and were thus rejected.

Customer Services

This Section dealt directly with the general public and processed import declarations benefiting from suspension of import duties as provided for under EC Regulation 918/83. In this regard, for example, there were 161 new applications for importation of personal effects. A total of 3,331 transshipment and shipping bills were processed (registration, checking, vetting, authorising and settling after export) and several EU TARIC Database queries dealt with. The Section also handled 167 claims for the refund of overpaid duties and processed 470 Garnishee Orders and Counter Warrants. It also compiled the daily booking list for containers selected for control. 5,147 import declarations submitted by the traders were entered manually by staff into the Customs Electronic System (CES), apart from also inputting statistical data contained in 25,201 'intrastat' forms presented by traders. This Section also saw to the registration of new importers, administering CES user accounts, issuing printouts of declarations upon request, and monitoring the status of yachts and pleasure seacraft.

Archives/Records Office

During the year, this office stored 3,195 and retrieved 751 archived files, besides making document insertions, as referred and requested by the Registry Office at Customs. It also sorted out 4,200 export documents and 1,700 TSB documents referred to it from a number of other Customs sections.

Risk Management Unit

This Unit was mainly responsible for the drafting and updating of profiles in the Risk Analysis System, created mainly on information obtained from the European Anti-Fraud agency (OLAF) and the Risk Management Unit of the Commission's DG TAXUD, as well as from alerts issued by local or foreign Intelligence Services. Specifically in 2009, risk evaluation was made on 863 risk information forms (RIFs), 53 mutual assistance alerts, 317 intelligence reports and 34 foreign Customs Authorities alerts. There were 657 newly created specific risk profiles, while 258 others were updated and 83 obsolete ones were deactivated. The Unit disseminated 31 risk alerts internally to other Customs sections. Also this year, a B-Learning training programme on Container Examination was organised for all releasing officers, and four seminars were also held in which 35 officials were trained with the latest techniques on specialised container inspection controls and documentary checks. A comprehensive guidelines manual was also published in these regards. Being involved in the Customs Control Strategy, the workings of this Section were also audited by the Commission during this year.

Landing and Releasing

The Landing & Releasing Branch of the Customs Division comprises the following Outstations: Deep Water Quay, Examination Shed, Courier Office, Airfreight Section, Malta Freeport, Hal Far Groupage Complex, Laboratory Wharf, Parcel Post Office, Malta Shipyards and the Weighers Office.

Deep Water Quay (DWQ)

During 2009, a total of 186 vessels discharged and/or loaded cargo at the DWQ. Discharges included 6,569 full load container or trailer units, 63,020 tonnes of conventional cargo and 7,804 cars. A new ferry, the *Silver Coral* introduced by Ocean and Sky Logistics and operating to/from Pozzallo, came into service at the start of the year, but only thus kept until July. Regular stocktaking exercises were carried out at Shed 1 which houses a customs warehouse for the storage of oil drilling equipment in transit.

Examination Shed

During the year, 3,387 container or trailer units from non-EU countries were selected for control, examined and released, including 1,403 units examined at importers' premises and 527 units examined at General Examination Shed, the latter now located at the Hal Far Customs Groupage premises. 429 units were scanned by the Customs truck-mounted scanner and 1,457 were 'quick released'. Additional revenue collected on the basis of discrepancies noted amounted to €162,308.

Parcel Post Office

The workload of the Customs Parcel Post Office has increased considerably through e-commerce, and this was positively reflected in the revenue collected. In fact, revenue collected at the PPO totalled €720,733 which translates into one of the biggest percentage increases of revenue collected by Customs from all its operating stations. A new fixed x-ray scanner was commissioned and is now fully operational. Particular attention was given to purchases over the Internet of medicinal products which were referred for clearance by Environmental Health authorities.

Courier Office

As with Parcel Post, this Office also experienced increased activity as a result of e-commerce. In 2009, a new courier service was operated by trailer. What started as a once-a-week service was soon increased threefold to three times a week. In the course of inspections, various parcels were referred for clearance from other governmental entities, namely: the Port Health Office (188), Consul for Gold and Silver (38), CITES (19), Veterinary Services (51), Police Weapons Office (4), Police Anti-Drug Squad (1), Immigration Police (8), Malta Standards Authority (24), and Plant Health Department (11). 21,894 TDIDs were released in 2009, of which more than half were selected for control. 202,436 cartons and bags passed through the Courier Office, of which 43,569 (22%) were non-EU. 353 consignments were referred for censorship. TSBs raised at this Office totalled 540, while another 541 were dispatched under escort. 1,312 import manifests were received. The total revenue collected by this Office was €2,598,880.

Airfreight

A total of 6,356 manifests were handled by this Section, and 7,986 import declarations were received, of which 2,308 were selected for control. Total revenue collected by this Office amounted to €7,947,936, including VAT. Visits from Customs Enforcement officials were very regular and useful, and suspected IPR consignments were withheld and checked with their assistance. Occasional inspections were also carried out on goods in transit, especially those with potentially dual-use purposes.

Malta Freeport

The main role of this Section was to ensure that all units exiting the Free-Zone area were accounted for and covered by the necessary Customs documentation. A total of 2,675 *pratiques* were carried out, of which 1,677 regarded vessels coming from non-EU countries. 31,898 containers were despatched for local consumption, of which 11,421 were of a non-EU status and released for free circulation.

Hal Far Groupage Complex

A total of 5,700 units entered the complex located at Hal Far, of which 1,466 were non-EU. Random tallying was carried out on 220 non-EU and 59 EU units. There were also 1,489 spot checks carried out by an official at the gate. 31 groupage operators made use of this temporary storage facility in 2009. In an effort for greater trade facilitation and to promote the one-stop-shop concept, an agreement was reached with the Environmental Health Department to post an official at Hal Far complex for the clearance of food products. An office within the administration block was also made available for visiting health officials. In this way, unnecessary customs physical controls were done away with. During the summer half-days, traders were able to collect goods in free circulation up to 15.30 without any extra charge. Revenue collected at this section in 2009 totalled €6,918,899. Maintenance was carried out this year on the columns that support the external roofs of bonds, as well as on the walls and pillars of the main entrance to the complex.

Laboratory Wharf

This Section was responsible for the supervision of goods landed at Laboratory Wharf, Coal Wharf and the Grain Silo. A total of 501 vessels landed goods at this station. 248 containers were transferred from Malta Freeport to these sites, there were 909 gate searches, 516 ECNs/MRNs were processed, and 309 manifest amendments made. Discharged from here amongst others were: 10,515 container or trailer units of which 997 were from non-EU, 3,754 vehicles, 16 boats, 189 horses, 9,990 poultry, 376,418 tonnes of cement, and 153,093 tonnes of cereals. Loaded from here amongst others were: 3,305 container or trailer units of which 1,624 were to non-EU, 574 cars, 34,622 tonnes of maize, 31,377 tonnes of wheat and 5,689 tonnes of scrap glass. The Customs Office here was transferred to a new mobile office within the same area.

Malta Shipyards

Revenue collected from the Malta Shipyards Section amounted to €27,551, of which €5,560 were raised as deposit on T1 documents. 62 containers or trailers were examined and released. Also during 2009, Boiler Wharf, which formed part of Malta Shipyards, was taken over by the Malta Maritime Authority for use by cruise liners. The area was cleared under customs supervision, and VAT collected on scrap metal which was sold to third parties. The proposed privatisation of the yard was also being closely monitored.

ENFORCEMENT

Investigation and Intelligence Branch

The Head Office of this Branch coordinated the local, EU and international administrative and operational activities in anti-fraud matters. Meetings abroad regarding the EU Customs Cooperation Working Party (CCWP) and Mutual Assistance Committee (MAC) were regularly attended and contributed to. The CCWP is the coordinating group within the Council's structure with responsibility for progressing initiatives in the field of Customs cooperation, and it planned several joint operations for the year focusing on specific issues such as methods of drug smuggling and illegal trade in other goods. Two of these operations were tailored to include participation also by third countries: Operation Diablo II was coordinated with the ASEM countries, while the other operation which is still at an early stage, involves Euromed partners. The MAC has been engaged in significant amendments to Reg EC 515/97 concerning mutual assistance between the Customs authorities of the EU Member States, and cooperation between them and the Commission to ensure the correct application of the law on customs and agricultural matters. The year 2009 also saw the launching of the AFIS (Anti Fraud Information System) web portal, which is now the basic platform for all IT applications provided by the European anti-fraud agency OLAF. Obligations under the above mentioned regulation and other EU and international conventions regarding spontaneous dissemination of information were fulfilled through EU, OLAF and WCO databases and communication networks. These actions enhanced and consolidated the Malta Customs links with EU and international partners in the fight against criminal activities. Several initiatives were coordinated with local agencies such as the Police and the VAT Department. Input by this Directorate was also crucial for the favourable response obtained from the EC regarding the application for co-funding of the lease for a container scanner, and for the finance received by Malta Customs as a result of the agreement between Japan Tobacco International, the EC and its Member States. A similar agreement also exists with Philip Morris International, whereas participation in high level discussions in 2009 was achieved with representatives of Imperial Tobacco in a bid to reach yet another similar agreement.

Non-Proliferation Unit (NPU)

During 2009, this Unit performed 94 documentary checks; 83 on maritime consignments in transshipment and 11 on local exports. 62 of these consignments were inspected and 12 were withheld, since items concerned required export clearance prior to shipping to their destination. 11 of these were released once the export authorisation was issued. The other consignment, which was shipped in two containers, is still being withheld pending the completion of the verification process. Following a general alert on possible contaminated steel being exported from a particular country, the NPU also monitored several imports of steel from this country. The Unit also participated in a Joint Customs Operation (JCO) focusing on export control on airfreight consignments, as well as in various other meetings mostly related to security.

Post Clearance Audit (PCA) and Economic Procedures Enforcement Unit (EPEU)

PCA and EPEU staff carried out 364 visits to traders premises. These led to the raising of 13 post-entries and €48,799 collected in duties and other taxes. Unit officials were also involved in the screening process leading to the granting of the AEO (Authorised Economic Operator) status to certain traders and shipping agencies. Also during the year, an official from this Unit was tasked with the setting up of a Customs Databases Unit.

Container Monitoring Unit (CMU)

A total of 1,707 manifests of vessels were reviewed, leading to the scanning of 7,523 transshipment containers. 776 of these containers were furthermore physically examined, resulting into the seizure of the contents of 46 of them. 7,721 domestic containers were also scanned. Staff from this Unit participated in various meetings abroad, mostly related to Commission Regulation (EC) 1875/2006 regarding security and safety provisions.

Special Investigation and Action Team (SIAT)

This Unit tallied 59 containers and carried out over 1,500 searches targeting IPR infringements, CE markings and Excise controls, on vehicles leaving the Customs Hal Far Groupage complex. It also performed daily counter checking and verification of container and trailer units dispatched from other Customs stations such as Deep Water Quay, Laboratory Wharf and Malta Freeport Terminal.

Enforcement Unit

This Unit conducted 20 drugs seizures, of which 18 were concerned with passengers arriving by air via an EU airport. Another seizure resulted from a vehicle arriving by sea, and the other at the Courier's office. Drugs seized included: 6.7kgs heroin, 8kgs cocaine, 0.9kgs heroin & cocaine mixture, 24,357 ecstasy pills, 0.5gms herbal cannabis and two suitcases filled with khat. Concealment methods included: eight cases of swallowers or stuffers, eight cases of luggage with false bottoms, two cases of shoes with hollow soles, one case of hiding in a vehicle's door and one case involving a courier parcel. Controls at the airport also resulted in the seizure of 116,640 cigarettes, 1,049 pairs of fake sport shoes, 203 packets of fake medicine and five bird-skins (CITES). Cash control checks yielded four positive results, totalling €353,797 being withheld. Enforcement staff also responded to 41 alerts raised by the radiation portals at the Airfreight sheds.

Various surveillance duties and searches at open-air markets or commercial outlets for illegal excise goods gave 43 positive hits, leading to the seizure of a further 13,013,760 cigarettes and 323 alcohol bottles.

Searches on vessels and yachts also yielded two positive results, one for illegal importation of fuel and the other for contraband cigarettes. One speedboat and 11 vehicles were also withheld pending investigations. The fight against the illegal importation of fuel was intensified and 106 samples of fuel were elevated from various service stations, tanks or reservoirs in private yards, and vehicles or heavy equipment, of which 63 samples gave a positive result. One bowser and one box-truck both found loaded with contraband fuel were withheld. Other surprise inspections at private residences, garages and commercial outlets were carried out in connection with the use of light heating oil for heating purposes. Even here, several abuses were detected and further action taken.

In collaboration with the CMU, various containers in transit were seized as their contents were inconsistent with manifest declaration. Seizures included 67,383,054 genuine cigarettes, 15,747kgs. of tobacco, 31,680 cigars and eight container loads of medicine.

The Unit also supervised the destruction of 42 duty-free vehicles, whereas 13 other vehicles were surrendered to Government. €48,835 dues were collected from various importers following personal visits to by Unit officials, while an organised sale by tender of gold and silver items seized netted €6,079.

Inspections of merchandise in conjunction with VAT officials were carried out on 31 occasions. 31 transshipment containers loaded with counterfeit goods were withheld by the IPR Unit. 78 IPR cases were registered with 31 leading to legal action, and another 22 cases settled out of court. 26 other consignments were also withheld at the Airfreight, Parcel Post and Courier Offices. 44,729,300 counterfeit cigarettes, 8,023,836 other counterfeit items in transit and 3,675 counterfeit goods intended for the domestic market were also detained. Such items detained included: hair dye, mobile phones and accessories, moisturising

cream, shampoos, shower gels, sport shoes, other footwear, shoe polish, soap bars, wrist watches, outerwear, toothpaste and Viagra.

The Unit participated in various Joint Customs Operations (JCOs) organised by the European Commission and the World Customs Organisation. The focus of these operations included firearms, CITES, hazardous waste, cash, and counterfeit or contraband cigarettes.

Customs Intelligence Services (CIS)

During 2009, CIS continued with its primary task of vetting sea and air manifests for passengers and cargo in connection with the evasion of Customs, Excise, Anti-Dumping duties and VAT. Fraud, contraband, illegal export and import of cash, counterfeits, rejected goods and particularly the interdiction of narcotic drugs and fake medicine were also tackled by this Section. From all alerts issued from here, 17 'passenger' and 40 'cargo' ones resulted positive. Of note amongst these results was the significant number of seizures of narcotic drugs.

Cooperation with other enforcement agencies, both local and foreign, was intensified. This Service was also very active in the dissemination and exchange of comprehensive or specific risk related crucial information, and supported other Customs units during several EU-wide Joint Customs Operations. CIS staff participated and contributed to various meetings both locally and abroad particularly in areas related to general customs legislation, cash controls, AEO and Commission Regulation (EC) 1875/2006. Emerging threats and new modus operandi were also continuously monitored in order to formulate counter-measures against them, thus sustaining the high performance of this Section.

FRONTIER CONTROL

The main duties of this Branch included: the clearance of incoming and outgoing vessels, pleasure crafts, aircrafts and passengers to and from Malta; censorship of video tapes, DVDs and software; watching over and escorting uncustomed goods; patrolling on land and sea in Customs areas; supervising the landing and loading of all cargo imported or exported by air; releasing of accompanied commercial goods; collecting of the appropriate taxes (Import & Excise Duties and VAT); and effecting vigilance to curb importations of restricted and prohibited goods. Since EU Accession by Malta, Frontier Control roles have both increased and become more complex, particularly because Malta is situated at the southernmost border of the EU. This Branch also had to maintain close liaison with all its stakeholders, and coordinate its resources accordingly to address particular issues which arise from time to time, recently such as the avian and AH1N1 influenzas.

Yacht Marinas

The main Yacht Marina Offices of Customs are situated at Marsamxett Harbour, Grand Harbour and Gozo. The one at Marsamxett was reopened during the year under review, now located within new premises at the Torpedo Depot garden in Pieta'. In 2009, there were 609 arrivals and 461 departures of pleasure crafts from/to EU Member States, which crafts had requested Customs services. Arrivals and departures from/to non-EU Member States were 108 and 138 respectively. Marsamxett was responsible for 37% of all departures, the Grand Harbour for 36% and Gozo for 27%.

Customs Baggage Room (Seaport)

This Section operated on a 24x7 basis and thus shouldered also all the additional responsibilities of the Yacht Marina offices after normal working hours. During the year 5,952 commercial vessels arrived in Malta, 3,399 of which from non-EU countries, while 5,942 vessels were cleared outwards. These figures relate to all harbours, including those at Marsamxett, Marsaxlokk and Mgarr Gozo. 105 rummages were conducted on incoming vessels and, on one occasion, a shipping agent was fined for failing to notify

Customs upon the arrival of a vessel. Via seaports, there were 103,776 arriving and 99,015 departing passengers, apart from 415,095 others from cruise liners. 12,946 accompanied vehicles arrived in Malta and 10,516 departed. This Section processed 1,786 Transhipment Shipping Bills (TSBs), 2,268 duty-free deliveries and 4,980 fuel stores authorisations. Currency spot checks on incoming/outgoing passengers totalled 1,098 and a further 1,340 searches were carried out at the various customs areas entry and exit gates. On one occasion, a vessel crew member was caught attempting to smuggle cartons of cigarettes into Malta.

Airport

A total of 2,531 aircrafts arriving from non-EU countries landed in Malta. Freight landed at the airport amounted to 5,632,099kgs whilst 5,716,141kgs were exported. Arrivals from non-EU countries amounted to 161,714 passengers, of which 1,062 were in transit. 161,762 passengers, of which 862 were in transit departed from Malta. 578 currency control checks were carried out on incoming or outgoing passengers. 16 seizures of meat or meat products and one seizure of milk products were carried out, amounting to just over 88kgs, which goods were confiscated and destroyed by incineration. Other tasks undertaken by Customs here related to: safety and security; protection of the environment and flora/fauna species; safeguarding against illegal importations, such as by being vigilant on IPR infringing goods and evasion of anti dumping restrictions. Import & Excise Duties and VAT taxes collected amounted to €28,502 in total, and a further €689 collected as fines on dutiable goods undeclared by passengers passing through the Green Channel. This Section operated on a 24x7 basis.

Prohibitions and Restrictions

Taxes collected amounted to €105,272. Out of a total of 29,514 pieces of recorded media submitted for vetting, 1,083 were viewed and assessed, of which nine were withheld. Two of these were referred by the importer to the Printed Matter Appeals Board.

IRO GALEA

Director General (Customs)

Treasury Division

BACKGROUND

During 2009, the Treasury Division continued to focus on its operational goals, these being to:

- Monitor and control the financial activities of Government;
- Ensure that Government is in a position to meet its financial obligations at the least possible cost;
- Assist government departments by providing them with comprehensive information and accurate financial and management reports;
- Make use of the most appropriate IT systems to enable it to operate as a seamless organisation;
- Improve communications and relationships with other organisations and stakeholders; and
- Provide advice for good governance and maintain and develop a talented workforce with broad expertise and experience as the essential asset base of the organisation.

During the year under review, the Division also proceeded with the re-alignment of its operations to reflect its core business. In this regard, with effect from 6 November 2009 and in terms of Legal Notice 327 of 2009, the payment and maintenance of salaries of government employees fell under the responsibility of the Office of the Prime Minister.

In order to attain its strategic and operational objectives, the Treasury Division is split into two main Directorates namely, the Government Accounts Directorate and the Debt Management Directorate.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTS DIRECTORATE

The aim of the Government Accounts Directorate is to maintain an effective accounting methodology and accounting systems across Government; exercise a monitoring role on the disbursements of public funds and report fairly and truthfully the financial position of Government.

ACCOUNTING OPERATIONS

Accounts Section

The Consolidated Accounts Section of the Directorate is considered to be the executive arm of the Accountant General. The main functions of this Section are to ensure that ministries and departments adopt and maintain uniformity in the accounting system. The Section is guided in this exercise by the Financial Regulations 1966 and the Financial Administration and Audit Act 1962 as well as by circulars issued from time to time to help in the interpretation of financial policy and legislation.

With the publication of Legal Notice 185/2007 on 13 July 2007, the responsibility of the Accounting Officer, as defined in the amended Financial Legislation, was further strengthened. The processing and Vote accounting of transactions effected by ministries and departments continued to be the main function of the Section. These transactions involved accounts belonging to the Consolidated Fund, the Treasury Clearance Fund and other funds and accounts held by Government.

During the year under review, the Accounts Section processed local payments which were made up as follows:

Batches	Cheques	Value
12,885	137,763	€306,494,923.21

Reports

Apart from its day-to-day business, the Section also carried out additional assignments during the year including the issue of ad hoc reports requested by the Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Investment, the National Statistics Office and the Central Bank of Malta. Other reporting as required by legislation was also carried out by this Section within the established time-frames. Of particular relevance were the Section 65 Statements, the Annual Financial Report, the monthly Comparative Return of Expenditure and Revenue, and the publication on a quarterly basis of the Consolidated Fund Account.

The Section also carried out other duties relating to Public Credit, Government Loans and Investments, Investments through MGI, Trust Funds and their related Investments, Warrants and Advances, collection of returns from departments on their respective Arrears of Revenue, collection and verification of returns on Stores Written off/Cash Losses, and monitoring of Other Deposit Accounts.

Cash Office

As in previous years, bank reconciliation was undertaken by the Cash Office and the manual process for outstanding transactions from 2002 to 2008 is practically complete. Manual reconciliation for 2009 is 70% complete. Liaison and coordination with MITA and departments was maintained to ensure that the process progressed smoothly. Moreover, testing on new developments in the bank reconciliation system is being carried out.

A new database program was created in-house to facilitate the collection of ministerial/departmental bank accounts held at the Central Bank of Malta and local commercial banks. Briefing sessions to officers-in-charge from all ministries/departments will be conducted at the beginning of January 2010, during which the database program will be distributed.

A total of 661 stop payments and 520 Garnishee Orders were handled.

Bank Transactions Unit

The Bank Transactions Unit is responsible for effecting overseas and local payments. The following table illustrates the number of transactions by category effected by the Unit:

Transaction Type	Number	Value (€)
Credit Advice	4	-425,765
Debit Advice (Local)*	2,478	1,371,174,863
Debit advice (Foreign)	140	11,176,494
Funds transfers	2,939	94,521,529
Draft	648	3,171,841
Letter of Credit	7	724,407
Travel	5,036	3,027,964

*Debit advices issued by salaries and public debt are not included

Verifications Unit

The Verifications Unit was set up in 2008. The main objective of this Unit is to carry out the verification of payments being processed and other payments already processed and paid by government departments, as defined in Legal Notice 185 of 2007, amending the General Financial Regulations. The aim of this process is to ensure proper spending of public funds and that all payments are effected according to

standing financial regulations. During the year under review, authorised officers within this section carried out verifications on batches containing payment vouchers which were processed for payment during 2008 and 2009.

Travel

Verifications of post travel documentation on visits abroad are undertaken by the Verifications Unit.

During 2009, checking of pre travel documentation was carried out more rigidly and departments instructed, wherever omissions were noted, to abide by established procedures. Furthermore, the Direct Credit Settlement of travel allowance was introduced, having delegates who travel abroad being credited with the funds directly into their personal bank accounts. This system was initially launched as a pilot scheme with chosen ministries identified by the Treasury Division and consequently rolled out throughout all government departments. A system of close coordination between Treasury and the Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Investment was strengthened, ensuring that departments strictly followed official regulations and policies.

During the year, the Unit continued with the maintenance of the 2005-2008 travel databases and enhanced the 2009 database. 4,118 visits abroad have been recorded for 2009.

EU Funds Management

The role of the EU Funds Management Unit is to ensure the efficient management and control of the EU Funds allocations. In 2009, the EU Funds falling under the direct responsibility of the Unit comprised the:

- Transition Facility;
- Structural Funds and Cohesion Fund 2004-2006 (Including Cohesion Fund 2004 – 2006 and EQUAL);
- ERDF, ESF and Cohesion Fund falling under Cohesion Policy 2007-2013;
- External Borders, European Refugee and Return Fund falling under EU Migration Policy 2007-2013;
- European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF);
- EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanism;
- Migration Flow Funds.

During the year, the Unit transferred payments amounting to €62,442,512, an average of payments amounting to €5,203,542 per month. The table below summarises the payments made throughout the year by their respective fund. The total figure indicated refers to bank payments processed.

Fund	Total Value (€)
Transition Facility	2,373,169
Structural Funds 2004-2006	6,258,653
Cohesion Policy 2007-2013	37,903,019
EGF	636,081
External Borders Fund	14,618,238
European Refugee Fund	78,754
Return Fund	574,598
Total	62,442,512

Migration Flow Funds

During 2009 a Financial Information System for the management of Migration Policy 2007-2013 payments was successfully internally developed and adopted. A number of meetings with the Ministry of Justice and Home Affairs (who have the Role of Responsible Authority) were carried out on a regular basis, whilst various ad hoc meetings with beneficiaries were also held so as to facilitate the execution of payments from the said funds.

European Globalisation Funds

All the payments that were received by the Unit were successfully processed and paid on time, albeit the fact that most were received at the last possible moment.

ACCOUNTING METHODOLOGY AND CONTROL

Accounting Methodology and Compliance Unit

The Accounting Methodology and Compliance Unit is primarily responsible for collecting and checking accrual accounting returns submitted by government departments on a quarterly basis. This Unit has been strengthened with the appointment of qualified staff in order to increase the level of accuracy of the information submitted and ensure adherence to the Malta Government Accounting Standards. The primary objective is to obtain an accurate picture of the financial situation of each department when compiling the yearly financial statements under the accrual accounting methodology, which are currently being produced for internal consumption only.

The Unit has expanded its functions in preparation for the introduction of a new corporate financial solution across Government that offers adequate solutions able to address current requirements. A Project Board has been appointed for this purpose which has formulated a vision for a new Corporate Financial System. The way forward has been officially approved and up to the time of writing this report the Project Board was at an advanced stage in concluding the tender specifications.

Another initiative concerns the updating of the Malta Government Accounting Standards. These standards, which are based on the International Accounting Standards, provide guidance on financial reporting and address the specific requirements of the ministries/departments of the Government of Malta.

Treasury has been meeting with all Directors Corporate Services responsible for ministries/departments to scrutinise the accrual based information submitted during the year. For this reason, an Accrual Accounting Work Group (AAWG) has been established consisting of members from Treasury, MITA, and the Internal Audit & Investigations Division. At this forum, Directors Corporate Services/Directors Financial Management and other representatives from the respective ministries/departments are called to discuss and scrutinise their accrual based financial statements. Up to the time of writing this report, meetings have been held with two ministries and their respective departments, which are the Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, and the Ministry for Social Policy. Meetings are currently taking place with the Ministry for Justice and Home Affairs.

The ultimate objective of the AAWG is to facilitate the way towards business process re-engineering and the implementation process of the new financial corporate solution, by identifying key resources from each ministry and department to ensure that these officers are groomed to become leaders and promoters of change within their respective departments.

DEBT MANAGEMENT DIRECTORATE

The Directorate was set up in December 2006 to carry out the key objectives in debt management activity, focused primarily on ensuring that:

- the funding requirements for the Central Government borrowing programme (short and long term) can be financed prudently and cost effectively;
- the annual debt servicing costs are met at the lowest possible cost; and
- the development of the domestic financial markets is given the necessary support.

The integration of Malta into the euro area on 1 January 2008 posed new challenges and opportunities in achieving the above stated objectives. To date, in order to meet the borrowing requirements, the

Government's policy has been that of relying, almost exclusively, on issuing euro-denominated stocks in the domestic market, rather than raising funds on the international markets.

Furthermore, as part of its cash management activity to cover any short-term revenue shortfalls, the Government conducts weekly auctions for the issue of Treasury bills. These serve as *temporary borrowing* tools and usually carry a tenor of: 28 days; 91 days; 182 days; 273 days; and 364 days.

The Government's debt portfolio also includes foreign loans, set up as bilateral agreements with foreign governments and international institutions. To date, the Directorate does not borrow for lending activities.

In the course of 2009, the Directorate continued to implement the recruitment programme initiated during 2008 with a view to building a strong analytical capability with the appropriate technical staff over a medium to long term process. The engagement of two Economics Officers marked the first steps towards creating a functional middle office environment within the Directorate. Eventually, a fully functional middle office will enable the Directorate to embark upon initiatives that have been entrusted to its remit.

International Institutions

As in previous years, the Debt Management Office contributed to meetings with representatives from credit rating agencies such as Standard & Poor's, Moody's and Fitch. As the credit ratings assigned to Malta bear a direct influence on the interest rate charged on loans raised from international markets, the Directorate assigns significant importance to its interaction with these agencies.

In addition, during 2009, the Debt Management Office participated in discussions held with representatives from the International Monetary Fund who visited Malta in June and November for the Article IV consultation.

Economic and Financial Committee (EFC)

During the year, the Directorate attended three meetings of the Economic and Financial Committee (EFC) Sub-committee on EU Government Bills and Bonds Markets whose main objectives are to promote further the integration and achieve a better functioning of the EU government bond markets. The Sub-committee deals also with other important issues of public debt management, holds discussions that promote the sharing of experiences among the 27 EU Member States related to debt management and also supports Member States in identifying and implementing best practice in government debt management.

DEBT MANAGEMENT OPERATIONS

Treasury Bills

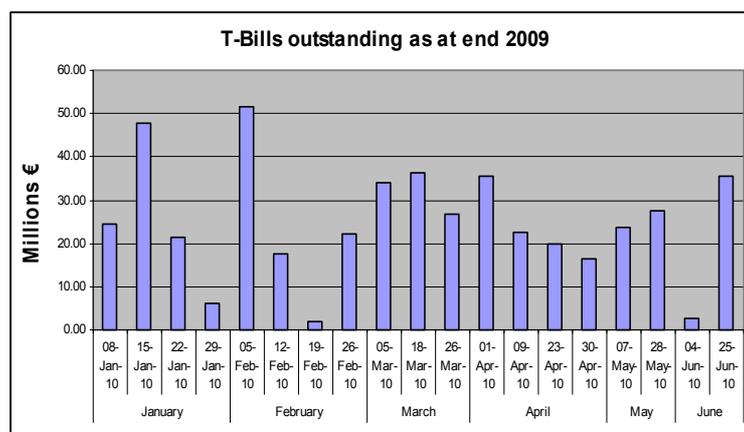
The issuance of Treasury bills serves a dual role: primarily to cover for temporary revenue shortfalls incurred by the Government and secondly, to maintain liquidity in the domestic Treasury bill market.

Treasury bills are offered by public auction on a weekly basis, normally on Tuesday and are issued in denominations of €1,000 with tenors ranging from 28 days, 91 days, 182 days, 273 days and 364 days. A mix of different tenors can be offered in any auction.

As of 1 April 2007, Treasury bills were dematerialised and were admitted to listing and trading on the Malta Stock Exchange. Yields on Treasury bills started to be computed on an *Actual/360 days* basis.

The maximum amount of outstanding Treasury bills is established by Parliamentary Resolution. In 2002 the maximum amount was set at Lm300 million, equivalent to €698.80 million.

The chart below illustrates the maturity profile of the outstanding balance of Treasury bills, which reached €474.14 million at end 2009, an increase of €108.33 million over the amount outstanding at end 2008.



Level of T-bill stocks in market hands as at end 2009

Treasury Bills Issuance Programme

The issuances focused mainly on the 91-day, followed by the 182-day tenor (representing 66.4% and 25.7% of the total volume issued respectively). Yields for the 91-day T-bill fluctuated between 2.659% (on 9 January 2009) and 1.403% (on 4 December 2009). The yield of the 182-day T-bill peaked at 2.653% (on 5 January 2009) and was lowest at 1.516% (on 4 December 2009). Such interest rates for temporary borrowing are determined by the money market which in turn is influenced by the repo market rates.

Total offers accepted by the Treasury throughout 2009 amounted to €1,624.88 million, categorised by tenor and volume as shown below:

Gross Issuance of Treasury Bills 2009			
Tenor	% Share of Total Volume	Nominal Amount (€ 000)	Weighted Average Yield (%)
28 days	0.98	16,000	1.424
91 days	66.40	1,078,896	1.910
182 days	25.72	417,885	1.865
273 days	6.90	112,096	1.676
364 days	-	-	-

The cost of borrowing in 2009 amounted to €10.50 million, equal to a weighted average yield of 1.787%.

Redemptions on Maturity

Throughout 2009, the Treasury redeemed €1,516.54 million worth of Treasury bills, carrying a cost of borrowing equal to €13.80 million equivalent to a weighted average yield of 2.547%.

Malta Government Stocks

The Budget Measures Implementation Act (Act No II of 2009), which establishes the issuance target of Malta Government Stock for financial year 2009 was capped at €500 million. The issuance programme was applied for the purpose of:

- financing the Central Government borrowing requirements for 2009;
- redeeming Malta Government Stocks (MGSs) maturing during the year; and
- effecting changes in Central Government debt portfolio as and when required in line with Government's debt management policies.

Issuance of MGS

The Directorate continued to issue a combined prospectus which regulates the entire sum on issue when it is offered under two or more different stocks without the respective amount for each stock being specified. The offer price for each issuance is usually announced three days in advance of the opening of the applications and the results of the bids by auction are announced within two hours from closing time of auction.

The total sum raised through the MGS issuance programme during 2009 reached €459.31 million. There were five MGS issues during 2009, having a medium to long term maturity horizon as shown below:

MGS Issuances in 2009					
Issuance	Issuance Strategy (€ Millions)				Bid-to-cover ratio
	4-year	11-year	12-year	5-year FRN (Euribor +80bp)	
March	59.02		35.99		3.47
April	63.05				1.17
June	82.82	25.55			1.29
August	56.64		33.15		1.01
November	25.50	44.70		29.80	2.1

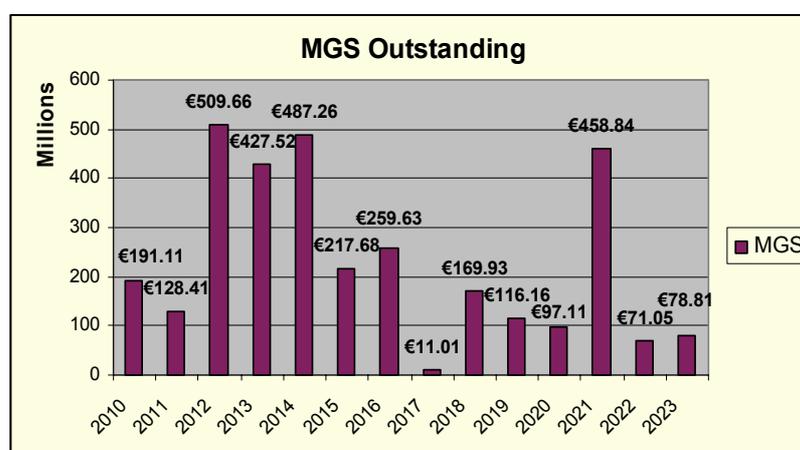
In addition to the above issuances, a placement of one MGS amounting to €13.670 million towards the partial settlement of ex-Church property was issued in June 2009.

In line with Government's debt management strategy, the Directorate has systematically issued fungible MGS with the aim to contribute to a further deepening in the liquidity of current benchmark issues.

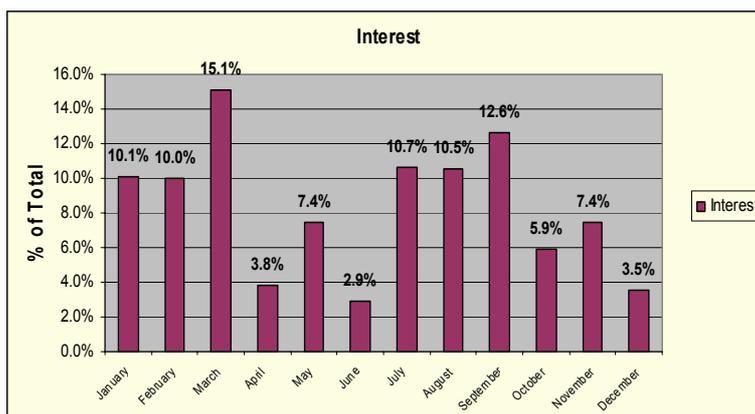
In November 2009, after consultations with financial institutions, the Treasury offered for the first time a structured financial debt security in the form of a medium-term Floating Rate MGS (FRN) linked to the six-month Euribor. The FRN had an embedded collar which guaranteed a floor of 1.78% per annum and established a cap of 5.22% per annum. Its first coupon payment was set at 1.787% and is to be paid on 25 April 2010. The FRN was positively received by institutional investors.

Debt Servicing

Three MGS matured in 2009, totalling €208.18 million. The outstanding nominal value of MGS as at year end reached € 3,224.18 million. The following chart indicates that a concentration of maturities lies in the 2012-2014 area (with 44.18% of outstanding debt maturing in the three-year period ending 2014):



The Directorate services the half-yearly interest payments to existing stockholders which during 2009 amounted to €172.78 million. Payments of interest throughout the year were spread as illustrated below:



Foreign Loans

Bilateral loans with foreign entities are specifically undertaken to finance large capital projects. A total of €13.43 million was repaid throughout the year according to the repayment schedule, resulting in an end-of-year balance of €100.56 million.

Interest paid on these loans amounted to €5.04 million. During 2009, the loan agreed to with the Republic of Italy (1986) was paid in full, leaving the Government of Malta with nine foreign loans pending.

Staff Training and Development

The Directorate continued to invest in the training of its human resources, both through in-house programmes and through external courses organised by local and foreign institutions. During the year, a number of training initiatives were undertaken and various opportunities were offered to staff to attend training courses, seminars and annual conferences organised by institutions both locally and abroad. These included: Risk Management in Government Departments; Training Seminar on Prevention of Money Laundering and the Financing of Terrorism; Training for Effective Treasury Management; EPDA's 4th Annual European Government Bond Conference; and Finance Malta 2nd Annual Conference.

Support Services

As in previous years, the Directorate continued to offer guidance and provide the necessary service to the heirs of deceased stockholders so that the heirs can have any inherited stocks transferred in their name by a procedure initiated through the heirs' own legal adviser.

Other Initiatives

With a view to maximising the potential benefits of Malta's membership of the euro area, the Treasury set up a working group comprising officials from the Treasury, the Economic Planning Division, the Central Bank and the Stock Exchange. The role of this working group is to assess the various strategic options available and determine how best to achieve the key objectives of debt management, particularly in the light of the current international economic situation. In this regard, ongoing meetings and teleconferences are held with a number of foreign financial institutions.

Moreover, a Legal Team was set up in October 2008 to review existing legislation on government borrowing and to prepare draft legislation on debt management in line with best practice.

NOEL CAMILLERI

Director General (Treasury)

Economic Policy Division

BACKGROUND

The Economic Policy Division provides Government with expert advice and assistance in the formulation of economic policy and the management of economic activity, with the aim of attaining Government's overall objectives of economic growth and development, high employment and low inflation. Attention is devoted towards the achievement of a stable macroeconomic framework, also by attaining an appropriate fiscal policy. Furthermore, efforts are being made to improve the incentive to work and to continue to attract foreign direct investment, to develop the tourism industry, to improve the educational system and the environment, to improve the competitiveness of the domestic economy, to support small and medium sized enterprises, to reduce excess bureaucracy and to support creativity and innovation. Within this context, the EPD provides Government with the relevant technical input, so that the implementation of policy measures is done within the framework of Malta's economic developmental goals.

The Division also provides technical advice and assistance to Government on international economic/trade issues. Through its participation in Commission Working Parties and Article 133 formations, the Division monitors and advises on the economic/financial impact of issues and strategies concerning the EU's *common commercial policy*.

Furthermore, the Division assists Government by providing economic analysis of policy issues emanating from Malta's participation in a host of international, regional, bilateral and multilateral institutions. The Division also provides support to other government entities whose area of activity may be affected by EU initiatives with third countries in the area of international trade and investment.

ECONOMIC STRATEGY DIRECTORATE

Budgetary Process

The EPD participates in the budgetary process, which is an essential tool in the implementation of Government's economic strategy. As in previous years, the Division provided information on the domestic and international economic situation as well as on the macroeconomic outlook. This information is important in order to ensure that the appropriate economic policy measures are formulated.

Furthermore, during 2009, the Division had a key role in the preparation of the Pre-Budget Document 2010 *Growth, Jobs and Social Cohesion*. This study comprised detailed studies on the labour market, competitiveness, as well as an analysis of public finances and of Gozo's economic development.

Throughout the year, the Division also provided an important input to the analysis of the fiscal situation and projections within the context of the EU's fiscal surveillance mechanism and the obligations of the Stability and Growth Pact.

EU Economic Policy Coordination

The Division continued to participate actively in the EU economic policy coordination processes. In particular, the Division participated in the Economic and Financial Committee (alternates) and the

Economic Policy Committee, including in Eurogroup composition. In addition, the Division also provided support for the preparations for the Economic and Financial Committee meetings. The Division also participated in a number of working groups attached to the EPC. In particular, the Division is actively involved in the Working Group on Ageing Populations (AWG) which examines the economic and budgetary consequences of ageing. Moreover, it also participates in other working groups of the EPC, namely the Output Gaps Working Group, the Joint EFC-EPC Working Group on the Economic and Financial Aspects of Climate Change and the Lisbon Methodology Working Group. It also monitors closely developments in the Labour Market Working Group and the Quality of Public Finances Working Group.

The EPD is also engaged in the preparation of briefings for the ECOFIN and Eurogroup meetings as well as for meetings of other Council formations and for the European Council meetings, as requested.

Towards the end of the year, the Division initiated work regarding the preparation of Malta's *Update of Stability Programme 2009-2012*. This Stability Programme constitutes an update of the first Stability Programme submitted in December 2007 and the first Update of this Document in December 2008. This Programme is an important document within the framework of the EU's multilateral surveillance of budgetary positions and the surveillance and coordination of economic policies. The Division provides an important input in this document, with important contributions, namely from the Budget Affairs Division, the Treasury Division and the National Statistics Office. The document is expected to be finalised and sent to the European Commission in the first months of 2010.

Earlier in 2009, the Division participated in the discussions on the application of the excessive deficit procedure (EDP) on Malta and the assessment of Malta's Update of Stability Programme 2008-2011. In particular, it presented Malta's position in the Economic and Financial Committee (alternates) and contributed towards the preparation for the relevant Economic and Financial Committee and ECOFIN meetings. The Division is continuing to monitor closely the developments regarding Malta's EDP.

During 2009, the Division continued to provide information on the domestic economic situation and on the economic policies and measures that are being pursued by Government to the EC and other relevant parties. In particular, the Division coordinates closely with Commission officials from DG ECFIN and provides the requested information in connection with the EU's fiscal surveillance process. Bilateral meetings were held both in Malta as well as in Brussels with Commission officials from DG ECFIN.

In February 2009, the Division participated in the country examinations meeting held by the EPC. The aim of this meeting was primarily to draft the updated country-specific conclusions, following the submission by Member States of their National Reform Programmes (NRP) in October 2008. During the year, the Division participated in meetings with officials from the European Commission on the Implementation of the Growth and Jobs Agenda. The Division provided input to the drafting of the NRP Annual Progress Report which was submitted to the European Commission in October 2009.

In May, the Division participated in the OECD's EU Economy Review held in Paris. This review was carried out by the OECD's Economic and Development Review Committee. The meeting involved a peer review mechanism whereby the EU's economy, macroeconomic developments and policies as well as structural policies were examined. Previously the Division had also participated in the OECD's EU Economy Review held in 2007 as well as the Economic Review of the Euro Area held in 2008.

Representation on the Malta Council for Economic and Social Development

The Division is represented in the Malta Council for Economic and Social Development and during 2009 it continued to participate actively in its proceedings. Furthermore, as in previous years, the Economic Policy Division computed and presented the relevant cost-of-living adjustment for 2010 as stipulated in the Incomes Policy Agreement of 1990.

National Econometric Modelling

The Division has two econometric models of the domestic economy. One model is used to produce short-term forecasts for the main macroeconomic indicators. The purpose of the second model is to undertake economic policy simulation exercises and to provide a framework for medium-term forecasts. During 2009, the Division pursued work related to strengthening its econometric modelling capability.

The short-term model (STEMM) was used to produce economic forecasts for Spring and Autumn, which were presented during the Economic Forecasts Meetings held between the Commission and the EU Member States. Discussions on these forecasts were held with Malta's desk officer in DG ECFIN. Such forecasts were also used for the preparations for the Budget. In conjunction with STEMM, an econometric model of Malta's balance of payments was developed in order to produce tentative forecasts of financial capital flows as well as income receipts and payments on the international market. Some of these forecasts are used in the Update of the Stability Programme and are also a useful indicator of the sustainability of growth forecasts.

The second disaggregated model (SAMM) was used on a number of occasions for the preparation of scenario analysis, including sensitivity analysis assignments as well as policy simulation exercises. This model is being further fine-tuned in order to reflect better the realities of the Maltese economy and to modify the way in which a number of important relationships within the model are calibrated. During 2009, in view of a number of assignments requiring the use of SAMM, the Division was required to undertake various technical updates, particularly in endogenising certain variables and making some changes to input data used by the model.

During 2009, the second model was used extensively in connection with two important studies carried out by the Division. The first was an internal study for the Ministry on the impact of COLA for 2010. The econometric model was used to estimate the impact of COLA on various economic indicators. In this study, a sectoral impact of COLA was also carried out. The second report was a technical study on the economic and financial impact of the proposal for a reduced VAT rate on restaurants. The study was commissioned to the Division by the Ministry in agreement with the Malta Hotels and Restaurants Association. By means of the econometric model, the impact of the proposal on the tourism industry and on the Maltese economy was analysed, together with the fiscal impact. Various scenarios were also carried out in order to analyse in a comprehensive way this proposal.

International Institutions

The Economic Policy Division provides information on the performance of the Maltese economy as well as on Government's economic strategy to representatives of international organisations.

As in previous years, the Division contributed in meetings with representatives from credit rating agencies such as Standard and Poor's, Moody's and Fitch. As the credit ratings assigned to Malta bear a direct influence on the interest rate charged on loans raised from international markets, the Division assigns significant importance to its interaction with these agencies. During these meetings, the performance of the domestic economy and the policies and measures pursued by Government to address the economic challenges faced by the Maltese economy were discussed.

In addition, during 2009, the Economic Policy Division was an important focal point in the extensive discussions held with representatives from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) who visited Malta in June for the Article IV consultation. Such visits are followed by published reports on the local economic scenario. As part of the preparations for the mission, the Division prepared a series of analysis covering various aspects of the domestic economy.

Pension Modelling

The EPD is represented in the Pensions Working Group set up by the Ministry for Social Policy and has actively participated in the discussions on the role of second and third pillar pensions. In this context, the Division contributed to the work of this working group through the modelling of alternative scenarios of systemic reform models, using the World Bank's PROST (Pensions Reform Simulation Toolkit) model.

The Economic Policy Division also provided technical assistance in relation to the estimation of the updates of the Theoretical Pension Replacement Rates 2006-2046 for Malta in an exercise coordinated by the Indicators Sub-Group of the Social Protection Committee.

Financial Perspectives 2007-2013

During 2009, the Division continued to provide support and input for the monitoring of developments regarding the Financial Perspectives 2007-2013. This included estimates for the Preliminary Draft Budget for 2010 with respect to Malta's net budgetary position. Furthermore, the Division provided technical input for the formulation of a Malta position on the EU Budget Review.

The Division is also involved in the Task Force on Own Resources which carries out work related to the Advisory Committee on Own Resources (ACOR). It provides technical input in line with its expertise related to the financial perspectives. In addition, the Division also participated in ACOR forecast meeting held in Brussels and was involved in the GNI and VAT base estimates for 2009 and forecasts for 2010.

Economic Implications of EU's Climate Change Package

During 2009, there was intensive work on various aspects of climate change at EU level in preparation for the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC which took place in Copenhagen in December. The Division monitored closely these discussions and provided technical input where necessary, particularly as regards the international financing of climate change. The Division is also participating in the 'Friends of the Presidency Working Group on Climate Financing', which was set up following the October 2009 European Council, to deal with the issue of EU internal burden sharing.

Financial Stability Issues

During 2009, in view of the international financial crisis and the need for Malta to monitor closely international financial developments as well as domestic financial developments, an internal group within the Division was set up in order to monitor financial stability issues. Through the work undertaken by this group, the Division analysed the various initiatives which were contemplated to bolster the financial regulatory framework at an international, EU and domestic level. In particular, the Division monitored closely the EU discussion on proposals for the regulatory overhaul of the financial system, particularly those related to macro prudential supervision. The Division examined in detail the relevant proposals and provided input in the formulation of a Malta position on the creation of a European Systemic Risk Board and issues related to macro prudential regulation.

Research and Publications

The professional staff at the Division carries out research work on various economic, fiscal and financial topics.

The Division published the Economic Survey in November 2009. This document, which was presented to the House of Representatives at the beginning of discussions on Government's budgetary estimates, provides a comprehensive analysis of Malta's recent economic performance and emerging economic trends, as well as an overview of international economic developments.

During the year, the Division worked on an internal study on the national minimum wage. This study comprised a comprehensive analysis on this issue, including the impact of the national minimum wage on the labour market and on household income distribution.

The Division also worked on a study on the online gaming sector. The Division carried out a study on the impact of this sector on the Maltese economy. The impact of the online gaming sector on the GDP, GNI and employment was analysed, together with an analysis of the sectoral and fiscal impacts.

The EPD, together with the Ministry for Social Policy, is involved in work undertaken in collaboration with the European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research in Vienna (ECV) as part of the Improving the Capacity and Usability of EUROMOD (I-CUE) project. This project is meant to assess the feasibility of extending Euromod (which is a micro-simulation model of the tax/benefit structure) to the new Member States. Planning for the second stage of this project, which will involve the actual modelling of tax/benefit systems, started early in 2009. The Economic Policy Division is expected to take a leading role in the modelling stage and during the year was responsible for coordinating all the efforts required in the preparation of this stage, including data related issues. The Division also attended the EUROMOD update project meeting in June. In view of data issues, it was eventually agreed that Malta would be included among the second group of new Member States for the initiation of the modelling of the tax/benefit system.

The Division also provided relevant economic input when requested. In particular, it contributed to the preparation of a report on national economy and on economic development in Gozo in preparation for the Conference of Ministers responsible for spatial planning and to the drafting of Malta's Strategic Report 2009, which provided an update of the information provided in the National Strategic Reference Framework 2007-2013.

During 2009, the Economic Policy Division continued to hold active discussions with the Central Bank of Malta, on the coordination of economic policies with a view to ascertain an optimal macro environment for further economic growth. It regularly collaborates with the Central Bank of Malta in areas of mutual interest, as well as to discuss local economic developments and prospects. The Division also continued to sustain contacts with similar organisations abroad.

INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC RELATIONS DIRECTORATE

Common Commercial Policy

The Economic Policy Division, in liaison with the Permanent Representation in Brussels, has throughout 2009, constantly monitored and analysed the developments taking place within the Trade Policy Committees in order to ensure that Malta's views and interests are taken into account in the formulation of the EU's common commercial policy.

Multilateral Trade

The Division, in consultation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Permanent Representations in Brussels and Geneva, monitored developments and provided feedback on Malta's position with respect to various issues pertaining to the WTO Doha Development Agenda (DDA) negotiations. In particular, the Division monitored the developments with respect to the mini-Ministerial that took place in India in September 2009, together with the discussions at senior officials level including the Ministerial meeting of the World Trade Organisation that took place from 30 November to 2 December 2009 in Geneva. The Division participated in the Ministerial meeting, which amongst others, discussed the financial crisis and the role of the World Trade Organisation in providing support to overcome this crisis.

Bilateral and Regional Trade Relations

The Division consulted and coordinated with the competent authorities across Government to formulate a policy on a number of trade agreements that the EU is negotiating with third countries. Some of the most important include: FTA Agreements with ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) and the Andean Community as well as with Ukraine.

Negotiations with South Korea were concluded during 2009. The initialling of these negotiations brought into being the most comprehensive Free Trade Agreement that the EU has negotiated with third countries. The Division analysed and monitored this Free Trade Agreement.

The EU also commenced negotiations with Canada within the framework of a comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement. All EU Member States have agreed with the negotiation mandate that is expected to provide European companies with better access to Canadian markets.

Negotiations with Euromed countries continued in an effort to conclude an FTA with these countries by 2010. Discussions included progress on negotiations with respect to the liberalisation of agricultural, processed agricultural and fisheries products, especially with Egypt and Israel, and the conclusion of the dispute settlement agreement with Tunisia and Lebanon. Notwithstanding this progress, other areas are still lagging behind. Such areas include the liberalisation of trade in services and establishment with all Euromed countries apart from Morocco. Developments regarding the Commission's mandate concerning negotiations for a commercial agreement with Libya have continued during this year. Apart from including a comprehensive trade agreement, the mandate also gives way for the inclusion of political dialogue, economic cooperation, energy, justice and a number of other sectors where cooperation is possible.

The Division also continued to monitor developments within the context of various Economic Partnership Agreements with Africa, Caribbean and Pacific countries as well as bilateral trade discussions with China, United States, Russia and India.

Trade Policy Committee (Article 207)

The Trade Policy Committee is a trade coordination and advisory committee to the European Union covering all aspects of trade policy. The Division participates actively in the various committee formations pertaining to the Trade Policy Committee. These include: Full Members, Services, Anti-dumping and Anti-subsidy, General Systems of Preferences and Steel, Textiles and others Industrial Sectors Committee. The Division engages in consultation with the respective ministries and entities involved, as well as with social partners in order to draft the respective Malta positions.

Full Members and Deputies

This Committee discussed the bilateral and multilateral aspect of trade together with other themes including protectionism, developments with respect to the Doha Development Agenda, market access issues, as well as various bilateral agreements including the recent agreement between the EU and South Korea.

Services

This consultative Committee deals primarily with international trade related aspects in the area of services, including liberalisation schemes with third countries, better market access to local and European companies and transparency in international markets. In particular, the work of this Committee focused on the negotiations of services offers with Korea, Andean countries and CARIFORUM states, together with the ongoing developments within the World Trade Organisation on services negotiations.

Steel, Textiles, and Other Industrial Sectors Committee (STIS)

The Division followed the Trade Policy Committee STIS meetings which discuss steel markets, textiles and other industrial products. In particular, the Division coordinated the questionnaire response sent to the EU Commission on chemicals, on the basis of which a communication shall be issued in the future. This Communication will provide a policy which shall guarantee sustainable market access to chemicals for the EU market. The EPD also analysed an offer from Russia to the EU intended to increase steel quotas in the framework of the renewal of the Agreement between Russia and the EU on steel products. Developments in the Textiles Agreement between the EU and Belarus were also closely monitored.

Market Access Strategy

The Market Access Advisory Committee continued to extend the market access approach to other key third countries. More support was given to new trade areas where the Community has important economic interests such as trade in pharmaceuticals; a sector that is heavily burdened with barriers to trade. In addition, the Commission set up Market Access Teams in third countries and specific working groups which operate under the Market Access Advisory Committee. The aim of these groups is to prevent, detect and tackle trade barriers as well as to work on the concrete removal of specific barriers to trade.

General System of Preferences

The Division followed discussions of the Generalised System of Preferences Committee and the GSP Working Party. The discussions included various issues with respect to the granting of preferential access to markets for developing countries. In particular, the GSP Working Party discussed the Council Regulation applying a scheme of generalised tariff preferences for the period from 1 January 2009 to 31 December 2011.

Antidumping/Anti-Subsidy

The Division monitored and analysed the ongoing developments on anti-dumping, anti-subsidy and safeguard mechanisms. Advice was provided on a number of anti-dumping issues, this being based primarily on economic analysis whilst taking into consideration the objectives, interests and priorities of the various government entities and stakeholders. Some of the most contentious cases that were discussed included the imposition of duties on footwear imported from China and Vietnam and on cargo scanners from China. The necessary consultations with local and Community stakeholders were maintained.

Protectionism

The Division was engaged in a EU study concerning protectionist actions by third countries. This study has been triggered as a result of the financial and economic crisis that led a number of third countries to resort to protectionist measures that hindered access to their goods and services markets.

Investment Promotion and Protection Agreements

In consultation and coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Office of the Attorney General and other pertinent authorities, the Division continued negotiations on a number of draft bilateral Investment Promotion and Protection Agreements with a number of countries, including Morocco, Cambodia, Algeria, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and India. The Division also initiated negotiations with Serbia and Peru.

An Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement with the People's Republic of China has been signed.

Visit to Malta by the Swedish Trade Minister

The Swedish Minister responsible for trade, the Hon Dr Eva Björling, visited Malta between 14 and 15 April 2009 for talks with the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, the Economy and Investment. Other meetings were held with the Parliamentary Committee for European and Foreign Affairs. The Ministers discussed issues related to international trade policy including the Swedish Presidency's priorities on trade policy.

Visit to Malta by the European Commissioner responsible for International Trade

Baroness Catherine Ashton, then Commissioner responsible for International Trade, visited Malta between 28 and 30 May 2009. During this visit, meetings were held with the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance, the Economy and Investment. The issues discussed during the meeting with the Minister included the Doha Development Agenda, bilateral trade agreements with third countries and other issues related to international trade.

8th Sino-Maltese Joint Commission

The 8th Sino-Maltese Joint Commission was held between 22 and 24 June 2009. The necessary preparations were undertaken by Division officials in conjunction with the Private Secretariat of the Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Investment and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The agenda items included two Memoranda of Understanding on the banking and securities sectors and an item on the donation of television sets, furniture and RMB3m by the Government of the People's Republic of China to the Government of Malta.

Research and Publications

Advisory Services

The Division continued to provide its services to a number of government entities particularly through the preparation of information documents, technical advice on Malta's position with respect to issues pertaining to international trade and research, and analysis carried out to respond to ad hoc requests

JOSEPH RAPA

Director General (Economic Policy)

EU Affairs Directorate

BACKGROUND

The EU Affairs Directorate is responsible for the coordination of all EU-related issues falling within the remit of the Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Investment. As such, the EU Affairs Directorate is also responsible for coordinating the drawing up of a national position in preparation for meetings at the level of the Council of the EU and the EU Commission. The Directorate is involved in the dissemination of meeting agendas and documentation, coordination of attendance by officials at the meetings and the drawing up and clearance of instruction notes to be used by the technical officials and attachés participating in the meetings. The Directorate compiles Malta's position in consultation with the technical experts from both the public and the private sector.

The Directorate is also responsible for preparing periodic status reports on the activities and operations of the EU Affairs Directorate. It also provides adequate support to the Ministry's departments in areas relating to the European Union. The EU Directorate is also the coordinating unit for the preparation of letters in reply to infringements lodged against Malta, following the process from start to finish. The EU Directorate is also the contact point within the Ministry for the notification of Maltese legislation to the EU Commission.

Progress achieved in 2009

During 2009, the EU Directorate continued to be responsible for the preparation of instruction notes and briefing notes for officers attending meetings at EU institutions. This also entailed the preparation of briefing files for the ministerial delegations attending the ECOFIN, Competitiveness and Trade Council Ministers meetings. Apart from preparing the Council meeting files for the Maltese delegation, the EU Directorate organised pre-ECOFIN and pre-Competitiveness briefings for resident EU embassies. During these meetings, the Directorate informs resident ambassadors and senior diplomats of Malta's position on particular agenda items for discussion during the Council meetings.

The Directorate continued to coordinate the consultation process on proposals submitted by the Commission. Malta's position is drawn up in consultation with both internal and external entities. In 2009, the Directorate was also entrusted with the coordination of particular dossiers such as the auctioning of the emissions-trading scheme. The Directorate was also responsible for presenting the proposals at the Inter-Ministerial Committee (a Committee composed of high-level officials from all government ministries and headed by the Permanent Representative of Malta to the EU). During 2009, a total of 155 memoranda were prepared for presentation at the Inter-Ministerial Committee meetings.

Apart from preparing for Council meetings, the EU Affairs Directorate is also involved with the preparation for visits from foreign dignitaries visiting Malta. During 2009, the Directorate was involved in the coordination of the visits of two EU Commissioners and a Trade Minister, hosted by the Minister of Finance, the Economy and Investment. Besides these visits, the EU Affairs Directorate was also involved in the preparation of briefing notes for the Prime Minister's visits abroad and other meetings held in Malta.

During 2009, the Directorate, with the assistance and support of the Programme Implementation Directorate within the Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Investment, concluded the remaining projects under the Transition Facility.

DIANE SAMMUT
Director (EU Affairs)

Programme Implementation Directorate

BACKGROUND

The Programme Implementation Directorate is responsible for the management of the Ministry's Change Management Programme, including facilitating the implementation of the Ministry's endorsed policies, strategies and change management programmes and monitoring the implementation of the required programmes and activities, including Customer Care and Green Initiatives. The Directorate also coordinates and monitors EU funded projects implemented by the Ministry's entities and the appointments on Boards and Committees that fall under the Ministry's remit. The newly set up Conference Incentive Fund is also coordinated from within the Directorate.

EU Structural Funds 2007-2013

During the year under review, the Directorate continued the work to successfully close projects funded under the 2004-2006 programming period. It also coordinated and monitored three projects funded under the 2007-2013 programming period that included the developing of national metrology capacity in support of the industry, a project being implemented by the Malta Standards Authority; the setting up of a life sciences centre, a project being implemented by Malta Enterprise, and the upgrading and embellishment of industrial estates, a project being implemented by the Malta Industrial Parks. Assistance was also extended in the implementation of the seven aid schemes for industries managed by Malta Enterprise.

The Programme Implementation Directorate acts as a liaison between project leaders, the Planning and Priorities Coordination Division within the Office of the Prime Minister and other stakeholders, to ensure effective implementation of EU funded projects. It also assists other divisions and departments in exploring EU funding options for their projects and liaises between the Department of Contracts and other ministries to ensure the timely processing of EU funded tenders.

Customer Care

The Directorate receives customer care queries through the Ministry's website, the Clearance House at the Office of the Prime Minister, telephone calls, letters and personal calls. In mid-June 2009, the Clearance House started operating the e-ID system and since then, whoever sent a query or complaint had to do this with the e-ID system. The following table reports the number of cases which were received by the Directorate through the various channels available to the public:

Customer Care Issues - 2009								
Month	Customer Care Network		Website		Tel	Personal Calls	Letters	Total
	Clearance House	Local Councils	Local	Foreign				
Total	46	10	303	162	220	6	1	748

The Directorate also received and processed complaints from the SOLVIT Centre at the Commerce Division.

Boards and Committees

The Programme Implementation Directorate coordinates the appointments of boards and committees that fall under this Ministry's portfolio. This work is carried out in coordination with the Minister's Private Secretariat, the Office of the Prime Minister and the Department of Information. Records are kept of all members on these boards and committees and a database has been designed to keep records current and updated at all times.

Green Initiatives

The Directorate sustained its green initiatives, mainly through the continual implementation of new measures to safeguard the environment such as waste management, reduction of consumption of water and electricity. Centralised duplex printing was further increased and a scanning option was introduced where possible, in a continuous effort to reduce the consumption of paper. These initiatives were promulgated throughout the Ministry and its entities through the Ministry's network of focal points on green issues.

Constant contact is kept with the Green Leaders' coordination office within the Ministry for Resources and Rural Affairs and every effort is done to implement any measures that arise out of meetings and conferences.

Gender Issues

Throughout 2009, the Directorate followed programmes and attended meetings organised by the NCPE. The outcomes of these meetings were divulged to staff at the Ministry and also to the Ministry's other divisions, department and entities via the network of focal points on gender issues.

Conference Incentive Fund

The Conference Incentive Fund was launched in mid-2009 and this initiative was coordinated and implemented by the Programme Implementation Directorate. This new initiative assisted departments, ministries and entities in the bidding, organising and hosting international conferences in Malta. In this first year, 44 applications were made and 19 conferences were funded. Ten of these conferences took place in 2009, eight will take place in 2010, one in 2011 and a bid was made for an event to take place in 2012. The 2009 conferences brought more than 1,000 delegates for a total of 29 conference days.

Representation on Boards

The Programme Implementation Directorate through the Director participated in a number of boards during the year under review. These included the DAS Replacement Project Board, the Sanctions Monitoring Board, the Board of Standards and the Inter-Ministerial Commission for the European Capital of Culture in Malta - 2018.

AUDREY-ANNE CALLUS RANDICH
Director (Programme Implementation)

EU Paying Authority Directorate

Mission Statement

To perform duties and responsibilities relating to the financial management of EU-Funded projects and EU Own Resources with the aim of maximising the benefits to Malta within the obligations and parameters as set out in national and EC legislation.

MAIN AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

- To act as National Authorising Officer (NAO) in charge of the National Fund which had been set up as a Unit for the management of EU Pre-Accession and Transition Facility Funds;
- To act as the EU Paying/Certifying Authority with regard to Structural and Cohesion Funds and other Funds, Programmes and Initiatives, regarding the certification of expenditure and subsequent drawdown of funds from the EU Commission;
- To open and manage accounts in connection with receipts and payments of EU-related funds;
- To disburse funds relating to Own Resources as part of Malta's contribution to the EU Budget.

CORE FUNCTIONS

- Perform the duties of the Paying/Certifying Authority for Structural and Cohesion Funds 2004-2006 and 2007-2013;
- Perform the duties of the National Authorising Officer for Malta and be responsible for the management of the National Fund;
- Monitor progress of the projects which are being financed through foreign funds emanating from the EU and the European Economic Area and other non EU Member States, and draw budgets and forecasts for the said funds;
- Control and report on a regular basis the financial position of the funds and relative disbursements;
- Liaise with the DG Budget on the payment and financial management of EU Own Resources;
- Compile and maintain proper records of ex-ante, interim and ex-post inspections by third parties;
- Perform on-the-spot checks on the stakeholders involved in the implementation of EU-funded projects;
- Monitor the work of the Treasury and Contracts Department, which together are equivalent to the Central Financing and Contracting Unit (CFCU);
- Maintain an ongoing liaison with government institutions on EU-related matters in order to ensure that all commitments emanating from the various funding operations are being met;
- Manage the EU Travel Envelope regarding Malta's participation in EU Council and Commission meetings;
- Manage and process funds related to other EU Programmes, Flows and Initiatives.

WORK REPORT FOR 2009

Pre-Accession and Transition Facility Funding

The Director EU Paying Authority is also vested with the responsibility of National Authorising Officer which is a function directly delegated by the Minister of Finance, the Economy and Investment (MFEI). As stated in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), the Financing Memoranda (FM) and EC Financing Decisions for the four Pre-Accession and the three Transition Facility Programmes, the NAO is

recognised as the top leader in the implementation process. These Programmes are regulated by EC Regulation 555/2000.

The NAO continued adopting, in liaison with the European Commission, the Extended Decentralised Implementation System (EDIS) in the management of EU Pre-Accession funds, including the Transition Facility and ensured as an ongoing exercise that the EDIS requirements were maintained.

During 2009, the Office of the NAO liaised with the EU Commission to finalise the Transition Facility Programmes for 2004 and 2005. It is expected that by the end of March 2010 both programmes will be closed. Moreover, the NAO ensured that the deadline of 15 December 2009 in relation to the execution deadline for the Transition Facility for 2006 was attained successfully.

The National Authorising Officer was also involved in the following:

- chaired meetings with the participation of all the Horizontal Stakeholders, including the National Aid Coordinator, PPCD, the Contracts and Treasury Divisions to monitor the progress of all projects under the various Programmes and also to resolve any pending issues;
- participated in the biannually scheduled Sectoral Monitoring Sub Committees together with the National Aid Coordinator (NAC), Senior Programming Officers and the Project Leaders of projects under the various programmes, from various ministries, departments and other entities;
- participated in Steering Committees of Twinning Projects of various departments and ministries;
- issued circulars related to the implementation of projects under the Pre-accession and Transition Facility Programmes. These circulars included reminders to stakeholders regarding contracting and the disbursement deadlines of Programmes, another on Budget Estimates for each Project, and another on the submission of Irregularity Reports;
- participated and contributed in a number of monitoring visits and audits promoted by the European Commission on Projects under the Pre-accession and Transition Facility Programmes at various Implementing Authorities;
- monitored the iPerseus System for the updating of financial data on the various projects;
- communicated its position on various issues and problems encountered.

The total amount of funds received from the Commission during 2009 to finance projects of the Programmes still open, added up to €832,469. Following authorisation of payments according to expenditure effected at project level, €2,067,764 were actually transferred to Government Revenue. Detailed information is included in table below:

Pre-Accession and Transition Facility Funds for 2009		
<i>Programme</i>	<i>Funds transferred to Government Revenue (€)</i>	<i>Funds received from Commission (€)</i>
TF 2005	1,023,742.85	0
TF 2006	1,044,021.40	832,468.80
Totals	2,067,764.25	832,468.80

Structural and Cohesion Funds

The Directorate also had the role of Paying Authority (PA) for Structural and Cohesion Funds and during 2009 honoured Malta's commitments and obligations and fulfilled its functions and tasks emanating from EC Regulations 1260/1999 and 438/2001 for the Programming Period 2004-2006 and as Certifying Authority under EC Regulation 1083/2006 for the new Programming Period 2007-2013.

During 2009, the Directorate experienced a heavy load of work since it had to cope with all the obligations and responsibilities emanating from the Structural and Cohesion Funds system whilst retaining all the responsibilities pertaining to Pre-Accession and Transition Facility Programmes. The Directorate performed a total of 12 certifications of expenditure to the Commission during the year and was directly responsible for overseeing the whole certification process, and drawing up the necessary financial reports and disbursement claims. The said certifications carried out consisted of seven certifications under

Structural Funds for 2004-06 and five certifications under Structural Funds for 2007-2013. All the said certifications were accepted by the Commission and the relative funds transferred to Government Revenue.

During 2009, the PA implemented the strategy for the certification of structural and cohesion funds for the programming period 2007-2013.

The EU Paying Authority continued to establish and maintain efficient communications and contacts with the Financial Services at the EU Commission in Brussels and with the different Funds to ensure a smooth and reliable process.

During the year, the PA participated as a permanent member, in all the various Monitoring Committees for Structural and Cohesion Funds for the periods 2004-2006 and 2007-2013. Throughout the year the Directorate was involved in other fora and communicated its position on various issues including updates for the structure and implementation of the new Structural Funds Database for the programming period 2007-2013 and also on the Manual of Procedures for the same period.

Furthermore, the EU Paying Authority ensured that the funds concerning projects under the Structural and Cohesion Funds were provided and committed in the National Budget. In this process, sound communication links with the Central Bank of Malta (CBM) were maintained at all times and instructions to the CBM were issued to provide statements of account of all transactions, including interest earned on balances and other certifications requested by the EU Commission. Details about the relative accounts were communicated to the pertinent services in Brussels.

The table below indicates the aggregated amounts of Structural and Cohesion Funds per fund for the 2004-2006 Programme received from the Commission and their eventual transfer to revenue following the certifications carried out in 2009. These funds totalled €8,654,334.

Structural & Cohesion Funds 2004-2006	
<i>Fund</i>	<i>Funds transferred to Govt. Revenue in 2009 (€)</i>
ERDF	6,139,036.68
ESF	1,298,380.83
EQUAL	115,909.11
FIFG	375,862.94
EAGGF	303,122.11
Total	8,232,311.67
Cohesion Fund	422,022.79
Total	8,654,334.46

The Structural and Cohesion Funds 2004-2006 (overall to date) table below highlights the aggregate amount to date of Structural and Cohesion Funds certified and transferred to Revenue per fund for the 2004-2006 Programme amounting to €78,704,347 and their respective absorption rates. The global average absorption rate to date for all funds is over 91%.

Structural & Cohesion Funds 2004-2006 (overall to date)			
<i>Fund</i>	<i>Allocation €</i>	<i>Certified and received amounts (€)</i>	<i>% Absorbed</i>
ERDF	46,697,639	44,457,130.67	95.20%
ESF	9,457,500	8,535,955.84	90.26%
EQUAL	1,241,163	1,171,757.01	94.41%
FIFG	2,837,500	2,463,456.02	86.82%
EAGGF	4,200,000	4,102,728.29	97.68%
Total	64,433,802	60,731,028	92.87%
Cohesion Fund	21,966,289	17,973,319.53	81.82%
Total	86,400,091	78,704,347.36	91.09%

Moreover as per table below for the 2007-2013 Financial Period, for the year 2009 and as at to date, a total amount of €45,737,930 were certified and transferred to Government Revenue under the various Operational Programmes (OP) and Funds:

Structural & Cohesion Funds 2007-2013		
<i>Fund</i>	<i>Allocation €</i>	<i>Certified and received amounts €</i>
OPI	443,978,031	18,674,018.78
OPII	112,000,000	3,934,893.00
Cohesion Fund	284,145,020	23,129,018.57
Total	840,123,051	45,737,930.35

Own Resources

The EU Paying Authority Directorate also managed the Bank Account relating to EU Own Resources. During 2009, close relations were maintained with the relevant services in DG Budget of the EU Commission and also local stakeholders mainly the Customs and VAT Divisions and the National Statistics Office, on the payment and financial management of Own Resources, reporting requirements, and the transactions to be made in the accounts and the exchange rate criteria. The Directorate ensured that payments to the EU Commission were effected on a regular basis and in the appropriate manner within the stipulated deadlines.

Payments of Own Resources effected by the Directorate for Malta in favour of the Commission during 2009 are highlighted in the table below and amount to €62,894,239. During the year, the Commission refunded to Malta €3,025,151 as indicated by the negative amount in the totals column.

Payments to the EU during 2009	€
TOR	9,645,369.66
VAT-Based	8,040,893.34
GNI-Based	43,619,948.03
UK Correction	4,218,543.96
Reduction in favour of other Member States	394,635.00
GNI Adjustment	(3,025,151.00)
Total	62,894,238.99

Travel Vote

The EU Paying Authority Directorate managed the Travel Envelope of EU Funds allocated to Malta in respect of the reimbursement of travel expenses for participation in EU Council Meetings as per EU Decision 190/2003 and also implemented the procedures for reimbursement for participation in EU Commission Meetings.

The Directorate conducted the following related work in this regard:

- coordinated the follow-up of all outstanding travel claims with all government ministries, departments and entities;
- formulated Malta's Travel Declaration in respect of the reimbursement of all travel expenses incurred following the participation in EU Council meetings;
- gave its contribution towards the issuing of instructions by MFEI, laying out the procedures to be followed by all government ministries, departments and entities for the reimbursement of travel expenses for participation in EU Council and Commission Meetings, apart from also providing information to the various stakeholders involved and also issuing various circulars in this regard;
- authorised the transfers of the EU funds from the Central Bank of Malta to Government Revenue and the respective government ministries, departments and entities claiming reimbursement of travel expenses following their participation in the respective meetings.

The total of travel funds claimed and transferred to Maltese revenue for participation in EU Council and Commission Meetings during the year in question to date, amounted to €964,550. This included €633,056 for Council Meetings and €331,494 for Commission Meetings.

Other Community Programmes/Initiatives and other work

European Globalisation and Adjustment Fund (EGF)

This fund was established to assist the re-integration into employment through occupational guidance, training and retraining, aid for self-employment, job search allowance and a redeployment scheme. Funds received from the EU Commission allocated to this fund amounted to €681,207. During 2009, the amounts certified and transferred to revenue totalled €318,920.

Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows

The EU Paying Authority Directorate performs the role of Certifying Authority for this Programme for the 2007-2013 period, which includes the four Funds related to Migration Flows, namely European Refugee Fund (ERF), External Borders Fund (EBF), Return Fund and Integration Fund (IF). The aggregate amount for the four Funds is circa €122m for a number of projects to aid Malta in this area. During the year, the Directorate continued to give its input as regards the updating of the Manual of Procedures. Moreover, the CA participated actively in a seminar organised by the Responsible Authority (RA) MJHA in November whereby it delivered a presentation on the role of the CA and on eligibility guidelines. In September, the CA participated also in a DG Justice, Liberty and Security seminar on the Solidarity Programme in Brussels. During 2009, the CA certified and transferred to revenue funds in connection with the ERF, EBF and Return Fund projects, and these amounted to €8,596,737.

Norwegian & EEA Financial Mechanisms (NFM & EEA FM)

Malta is participating in these Funds to achieve a social and economic disparities reduction with regard to participation in the Internal Market. The protection of the environment, the promotion of sustainable development, the conservation of European cultural heritage, human resource development, health and childcare, and academic research are the identified priority areas for Malta wherein eight projects (Technical Assistance included) are benefitting from €3,389,957. During the year, the Paying Authority participated in the Monitoring Committee and Annual Meeting for the European Economic Area (EEA) and Norway Financial Mechanisms. As at end 2009, €535,393 (NFM) and €269,982 (EEA FM) were certified and transferred to revenue.

Swiss Fund

The Directorate was involved in discussions on how the said Fund was to operate and the respective funds certified. The Swiss Government granted a fund amounting to €1.841million, covering 85% of the costs of a PET scanner acquisition, which is the only project under this fund. The PA participated in the Annual Meeting of the said Fund whereby the Annual Report was presented.

Fiscalis Programme

During 2009, work was carried out by the EU Paying Agency in its role as National Coordinator and Representative of the Fiscalis Programme 2013. As Account Holder, the PA managed the Malta Fiscalis Account held at CBM, regarding the transfer of funds from the EU to Government Revenue. Funds from the Commission received during the year amounted to €94,000. It also coordinated and managed Malta's participation in various activities offered by the Fiscalis Programme, such as seminars, exchanges, multi-lateral controls, committees and workshops and also contributed towards the hosting of a VAT-Customs Fiscalis Seminar in Malta. For the year, €148,178, which covered the reimbursement of travel costs by

Malta's participation incurred by various officials across departments and also the costs related to the hosting of the Seminar, were transferred to Government Revenue.

Other Work

The EU Paying Authority was also involved in other specific areas of work as follows:

- certification of €119,055 under the INTEREGG IIIA Italia-Malta programme;
- monitored and processed funds under the PRINCE agreement with the European Commission to finance the euro changeover process. For 2009, the funds transferred to revenue amounted to €384,479;
- played a key role in the setting up of procedures and systems for the certification of the European Fisheries Fund (EFF) 2007-2013;
- involved in discussions and a workshop on the JEREMIE initiative to assist SMEs;
- kept abreast with developments in the EU on various issues.

CLAUDE G CUSCHIERI
Director (EU Paying Authority)

Policy Development Directorate

INTRODUCTION

During 2009 the Policy Development Directorate was characterised by an important addition to its portfolio, namely the coordination of the Malta National Reform Programme (NRP), which saw the Directorate shifting from a merely internal function as Ministry Coordinator to an important role as driver of the Programme.

NATIONAL REFORM PROGRAMME

The Directorate's main assignment for the year was the coordination of the first Progress Report for the National Reform Programme (NRP) 2008-2010, culminating in a publication documenting no less than 79 macroeconomic and microeconomic measures. The Directorate was entrusted with the project, taking over the role from the Management Efficiency Unit which had previously been responsible for the compilation and follow-up of the NRP. In its role as NRP Coordinator, the Directorate received a European Commission delegation on two fact-finding visits in April and June (on the microeconomic, employment, and education measures) and coordinated the Commission's annual official visit in September, which focused primarily on Malta's country-specific recommendations and Points-to-Watch and addressed the relative issues. On a quarterly basis, all ministries (through their respective NRP contact person) were requested to submit a progress report on each measure falling under their remit. The Malta Council for Economic and Social Development and its Gozo Regional Committee were each given a detailed presentation to keep them abreast with the developments. The Progress Report 2009 was finalised and published in October and the launch was given due publicity with a press conference and an interview on national television. The next task at hand for the NRP Coordinating Team is the drawing up of the Closure Report for the current Programme and the formulation of the new NRP for the next cycle.

LISBON AGENDA

During 2009, the Directorate continued in its coordinating role of the Lisbon Strategy for Growth and Jobs. This included providing advice on policy issues and drawing up instruction notes on the current Lisbon Agenda and on the post-2010 Lisbon Process.

In November, the Commission issued a public consultation paper on the post-Lisbon "EU 2020" Strategy. This strategy should enable the EU to make a full recovery from the crisis, while speeding up the move towards a smart and sustainable economy. In this regard, the Directorate drew up a 'non-paper' Malta position prior to its publication by the Commission. Furthermore, the PDD started working on coordinating Malta's consolidated position on the EU 2020 Strategy.

BETTER REGULATION

The PDD is the Better Regulation Ministry Coordinator (BRMC) for MFEI. The role entails identifying opportunities for the reduction of administrative burdens, reporting progress on current Better Regulation measures taken in the Ministry, and acting as a contact point on Better Regulation both internally and with fellow BRMCs.

Until September 2009, the Directorate was also responsible for Better Regulation policy, including the formulation of Malta's position on all issues pertaining to Better Regulation at EU level and the participation in the Group of High Level National Regulatory Experts, Working Party on Competitiveness and Growth and Single Point of Contact (SPOC) meetings in Brussels. Since then, this responsibility has been handed over to the Better Regulation Unit (BRU), which now administers the Better Regulation policy in its entirety.

Up until that date, the PDD had continued with its work on the Government's Administrative Burden Reduction programme, and the Directorate was in negotiations with the National Statistics Office to discuss the possibility of using NSO resources to carry out the measurement across all ministries in collaboration with the PDD. The Administrative Burden Reduction programme has been passed on to the BRU as part of the Better Regulation package.

SINGLE MARKET

During 2009, the Directorate continued to coordinate issues pertaining to the Single Market. In June, the Commission adopted a non-binding Recommendation setting out measures that Member States could take to improve the operation of the internal market. It calls on Member States to report within three years on progress achieved, which will be followed by a cross-cutting assessment the following year. The Directorate followed and took the necessary action on the developments being pursued by the Commission through the proceedings of the Internal Market Advisory Committee (IMAC) meetings.

This was complemented by the usual provision of advice on policy issues and the preparation of Malta's position on the subject.

TRAINING

This Directorate believes in the continuous development and skill enhancement of its personnel. During 2009, PDD staff attended training given by the Staff Development Organisation in the fields of policy making, information technology, presentation techniques, writing skills, interpersonal communication, lateral thinking, and personal development.

INTER-MINISTERIAL COMMITTEES

During 2009 the Directorate represented the Ministry on the following Committees:

- Inter-Ministerial Committee on the UN's Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability;
- Inter-Ministerial Committee on the International Council of Nurses Congresses in Durban (2009) and Malta (2011);
- Inter-Ministerial Working Group on the Proposal for a Council Directive on implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of religious belief, disability, age or sexual orientation (Anti-Discrimination Directive).

CONFERENCES, SEMINARS AND WORKSHOPS

During 2009, the Directorate continued to ensure that it was always duly represented by a member of staff in national conferences and workshops focusing on various policy issues. These included:

- Public Dialogue on the Czech Presidency of the European Union: Europe without Barriers (January);
- ICT, Clustering and Other Networking Frameworks: exploiting their potential to boost competitiveness, innovation and sustainable growth (February);
- Conference on Entrepreneurship and Education (May);
- Malta – Hames Snin fl-Unjoni Ewropea (May);
- Workshop on the Freedom of Information Act (September);
- Half-Day Seminar on IP Enforcement Matters for Maltese SMEs (October);

- Europe after Ireland: What next? (October);
- Business Breakfast on Budget 2010 (October).

OVERSEAS PARTICIPATION

Officials from the Directorate participated in the following conferences and technical meetings:

- Working Party on Competitiveness and Growth – Better Regulation, Brussels (February);
- Joint HLG Competitiveness & Growth and Economic Policy Committee Meeting, Brussels (February);
- Internal Market Advisory Committee (IMAC) Working Group Level, Brussels (February, October);
- Better Regulation Single Point of Contact (SPOC) Meetings, Brussels (February, April, September);
- IMAC Directorate General Level, Brussels (March, November);
- Group of High Level National Regulatory Experts Meetings, Brussels (April);
- Competitiveness and Growth (High Level Group) Working Party, Brussels (October).

MARTIN SPITERI

Director (Policy Development)

Enterprise Policy Directorate

In its second year of operation the Enterprise Policy Directorate was primarily engaged in the transposition of the Services Directive, in development of measures for the furtherance of the principles identified in the EU's Small Business Act Communication and in a number of other activities intended to ensure that the Ministry met its obligations and provided the inputs required for a number of meetings organised by the EU Commission and the Council of Ministers.

SERVICES DIRECTIVE

In the process of transposing the Services Directive, which came into force on 28 December 2009, the Directorate had a coordinating and advisory role in ensuring that a number of other ministries finalised the necessary amendments to primary as well as secondary legislation required to ensure its correct implementation. The Directorate also had to ensure timely action by those Competent Authorities within the Ministry's portfolio that also had to update their legislation. This process reached a major milestone on 29 December with the publication of Act XXIII which included amendments to 16 other Acts as well as the Services (Internal Market) Act (Cap 500). The transposition process also required the setting up of an electronic single point through which applicants could find relevant information as well as submit an application for authorisation to undertake a service activity. Pending the launching of the e-Forms platform by MITA, the Directorate worked with the office of the CIO and the relevant Competent Authorities to collect the necessary data and coordinated with the Office of the Prime Minister to upload this information on the e-Government website in a section dedicated to 'Business'.

SMALL BUSINESS ACT

The Directorate has continued its work on establishing and developing the measures which have been identified to implement some of the principles included in the EU's Small Business Act. The exercise included the establishment of which measures fit in with the local scenario and can be therefore implemented at the local level. These include the possibility of facilitating the transfer of information for SMEs from one government department to another in order to avoid duplication of requests, the setting up of a Consultative Council for Enterprise as a dialogue between Government, regulatory authorities and stakeholders and the establishment of a College of Regulators with the aim of serving as a coordination forum for all entities whose function is somehow connected to the regulation of our market. The Directorate has also looked into the 'softer' measures included in the Small Business Act and has consequently taken action on a number of initiatives. These included the holding of a conference on entrepreneurship education in conjunction with the European Union Programmes Agency and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Youth. On another SBA point, which has been given prominence by the European Commission and which concerns national bankruptcy measures and second chance issues to entrepreneurs, the Enterprise Policy Directorate has compiled a list of best practices for Malta.

DIRECTORATE'S WEBSITE

During 2009, the Directorate worked on the setting up, collection and collation of information for a 'child' website of the Ministry. The website (www.entreprisepolicy.gov.mt) includes ample information about the Directorate's remit as well as news on enterprise policy, entrepreneurship and the EU's policy on the

subject. The website also includes information on the European Commission's working groups, their aims and objectives.

PARTICIPATION AT EU LEVEL

The Enterprise Policy Directorate has ensured participation at the various Council and Commission working group meetings. These include regular attendance for the Competitiveness Ministerial Council meetings, Women Entrepreneurship group, Entrepreneurship education, National bankruptcy and second chance working group, the National Start-up coordinators group and the Entrepreneurship and Innovation Framework programme committee meetings. The Directorate also participated in the EU's conference on the Small Business Act and the European Enterprise Awards, as well as in the initiative to submit two applications from Malta for the European Enterprise Awards 2010.

GENERAL

In 2009, the Directorate started contributing articles which are being published on a fortnightly basis in a Sunday newspaper. The articles touch upon topical items that are of interest to SMEs. Some of these articles included information on the Services Directive, the Late Payments Directive, the EU's Innovation Policy, the Single Market etc.

The Directorate was involved in Government's initiative on the Local Council Enterprise Support Award Scheme, which is aimed at incentivising local councils to take initiatives to assist and promote businesses in their locality.

ANTON SPITERI

Director (Enterprise Policy)

Information Management Unit

During 2009, the Information Management Unit within MFEI consolidated further its position and introduced workflows and procedures to provide a more professional and efficient ICT support in terms of operations, strategy, project management, consultancy, governance and user support to the Ministry and its departments. The IMU was instrumental in leading and implementing most of the IT initiatives and ensuring that these are in line with the overall Government ICT strategy.

Local Area Networks

During 2009, the IMU commenced an exercise to upgrade the whole network infrastructure of the Ministry and departments. The exercise involved the upgrading of all network hubs to managed network switches and the rewiring of network cabinets where applicable. Various other network-related tasks were also carried out in the various departments and these included:

- LAN extensions;
- reconfiguration of switches;
- installation of new switches and distribution switches;
- new network points or their relocation following office moves;
- upgrading of network cabinets;
- relocation of network fibre;
- laying of backbone cables;
- re-patching of telephony points in network cabinets;
- redeployment of network equipment from one premises to another;
- installation of Uninterruptible Power Supplies in a number of network cabinets.

Requests for services

The IMU logged and/or approved a number of requests for services that were required by users across the Ministry and its departments. All final approvals were granted only through the IMU to ensure more control when accessing systems or services and monitor costs. The range of requests for services included the following:

- Alterations in access to CDB accounts;
- Alterations in access permissions to generic email accounts;
- DocReg installations;
- Installations of the Structural Funds Database 2007-2013;
- Provision of Internet, e-mail and Corp accounts;
- Change in users details on Outlook Mail;
- New passwords notifications;
- Deletion of obsolete email accounts;
- Provision or deletion of home connectivity service;
- Provision or deletion of digital secure certificates and/or secure mail tokens;
- Provision or deletion of Teleworking accounts;
- Access to Arch DAS;
- Assign/revoke rights to shared folders;
- Upgrades to the storage limit of generic e-mail accounts;
- Upgrades to storage quota on network drives.

ICT Budgeting 2010

In July the budgeting process to submit the Operational (OPEX) and Capital (CAPEX) ICT budgetary requirements for the Ministry and its departments for 2010 was commenced. A number of meetings with all relevant stakeholders were organised in order to assess the ICT requirements for the coming year. The finalised ICT budgets were forwarded to MITA in October.

Desktop Leasing Programme

The IMU coordinated with MITA the Desktop Leasing Services programme to replace Desktop PCs and Laptops with leased ones. During 2009, leased PCs including a number of laptops were rolled out in all the following entities: Ministry Private Secretariat, Parliamentary Secretariat, Support Services and Corporate Services Directorates, Government Property Division, Treasury Department, Economic Policy Division, Customs Department, Consumer and Competition Division, National Statistics Office, Commerce Division, VAT Department and the Inland Revenue Department. Overall within the Ministry there were approximately 1,400 desktops (combination of PCs and laptops), of which 90% were leased. Other PCs and laptops were not leased for the following reasons:

- They were EU funded or donated PCs.
- They hosted systems which run on old operating systems or UNIX based systems.
- They were dual core PCs which were procured within the last two years.

User and Departmental Support

The IMU provided general technical support to the Ministry and its users. Though support calls were on the decline due to the desktop leasing agreement, whereby the leasing supplier attends to requests related to the workstation, the IMU still received additional requests of a different nature. The support provided consisted mainly of the:

- Provision of minor IT equipment such as Mice and Keyboards;
- Support for problems related to emails such as offline mail, backups, archiving etc;
- Provision of Video Conferencing facilities;
- Servicing requests for Teleworking including provision of ICT equipment and Internet Service at home;
- Transferring of IT equipment, set up of network and telephones following office moves;
- Assisting departments in installing attendance verification systems;
- Configuration settings on user's PCs;
- Participation in boards to identify unserviceable equipment;
- Assisting users in handling files in unsupported formats;
- Installation of non standard software following an exemption process;
- Assisting users in upgrading their leased PC/laptop when required.

The IMU also offered support to a number of departments within the Ministry related to diverse aspects of ICT ranging from project management, consultancy, advice and technical support. The following entities made use of our services: Parliamentary Secretariat, Customs Division, Treasury Division, Commerce Division, Consumer and Competition Division, Accountancy Board, and the Contracts Department.

DAC Accounts

A newly established framework by MITA assigned IMUs administrative rights on workstations within their ministries through a DAC account (Desktop Administrative Client). This account allows the holder of such an account to install software on users' PCs if need be, and also gives access to some settings that are usually disabled for the normal user. The IMU has extended and managed these accounts for a select number of key ICT contacts within the departments.

Patch Management Group

The IMU coordinated the setting up of a number of test users across the Ministry and Departments to assist the Patch Management Unit within MITA. The role of this group of users is to report any unusual behaviour to the MITA Patch Management Unit following the roll out of new patches on their desktops and/or systems. The scope of deploying patches on the testing group is to reduce the possibility of impact on the end user's workstation for both MITA managed systems as well as other third party systems at large. Following this rollout and subject to no issues encountered, these patches will then be released on the other workstation groups as per patch management schedule.

Procurement and Supplier Management

All ICT procurement except for leased personal computers and laptops was centralised within the IMU. This mechanism ensured more control on ICT spending and allowed the IMU to monitor and ensure that suppliers are delivering services/products in accordance to specifications, service agreements and/or contractual obligations. The IMU also checked the legitimacy and accuracy of various invoices related to the procurement of ICT equipment prior to authorising the payments.

To optimise the use of resources and reduce costs, the IMU also ensured that unused equipment available within certain departments was transferred and made available to others that required such equipment.

The IMU was also involved in managing suppliers and coordinating repairs on electronic equipment that needed to be carried out by third party suppliers. The IMU prepared the equipment for pick-up by the supplier, kept track of such equipment and ensured that the equipment was properly repaired and returned to its user/s.

Technician Apprenticeship Scheme

On the initiative of the CIO, an apprentice was engaged at the IMU through the Employment and Training Corporation. The sponsored apprentice is following a three-year course for a Computer Network and ICT Support Technician at MCAST. The apprentice will obtain the necessary hands-on work experience at the IMU by assisting with network related works and the provision of end user support.

ICT Asset Register

The IMU continuously updated the ICT Asset Register with new systems that were implemented or hardware that was procured. The register provides a snapshot of all the physical and intangible ICT assets within the Ministry and its departments. The assets include network equipment, information systems, ICT personnel, work centres and other specialised hardware and software. The asset register is used by the IMU as a basis for a proper ICT asset management framework and for inventory management purposes as well.

Monitoring and tracking of ICT Budgeting and Procurement

The IMU embarked on the development of a database which will be used to internally monitor the IT expenditure and generate reports related to budget expenditure, payments due and forecasting of costs. Due to the sheer number of software licences, digital certificates, IT equipment and ICT services that are procured and/or provided during the year, the use of such a database will assist the IMU to monitor and track better ICT expenditure.

Generic e-mail Accounts

During the past year, the IMU initiated an exercise to validate the number of generic e-mail accounts registered on the Ministry at MITA. A total of 136 generic e-mail accounts with a total of 501 permissions

pertaining to various departments and personnel within MFEI were verified. A total of 146 generic e-mail accounts had to have their user permissions modified due to either movement of staff from one department/section to another or because users joined or left the Ministry. Four e-mail accounts no longer in use were deleted after ensuring that any relevant data had been saved/or transferred.

Open Source Software

The IMU commenced a process to start identifying a number of Open Source Software programs that may be used to replace commercial software. Since open source normally do not incur a licence cost, it makes economic sense to start using this kind of software to satisfy certain non-critical business needs rather than procuring expensive proprietary programs. This exercise is being conducted in conjunction with MITA's Compliance Unit to ensure that only open source software acceptable to MITA is selected for use within the departments.

New websites and related support

The IMU was heavily involved in works related to web related support and development. Responsibility for keeping the Ministry portal www.finance.gov.mt updated also lies within the IMU.

During the year under review the IMU assisted five different departments in launching a new website. These were:

- www.commerce.gov.mt for the Commerce Division
- www.mfst.gov.mt for the Malta Financial Services Tribunal
- www.consumer.gov.mt for the Consumer and Competition Division
- www.consumeraffairscouncil.gov.mt for the Consumer Affairs Council
- www.enterpriepolicy.gov.mt for the Enterprise Policy Directorate

The IMU was involved in the requirements gathering stage, selection of suppliers, project management, quality assurance, domain name registration, hosting arrangements and formulation of maintenance and support agreements, among other tasks.

Following a security scan of all websites hosted at MITA, a number of vulnerabilities were discovered on some websites belonging to entities that fall within the remit of the Ministry. The IMU assisted these entities in making the necessary amendments to their websites to mitigate against such vulnerabilities by liaising with the developers of the sites, MITA and the entities themselves.

The former Euro Portal was decommissioned and its contents archived for future reference. In the meantime the IMU developed a webpage on the Ministry's web portal containing information of historical relevance with regard to the euro changeover process. The webpage *Introduction to the Euro* has been published under the "Library" section of the Ministry's portal. The existing domain name euro.gov.mt was also retained to automatically route users to this web page and also ensures that existing links to the ex-Euro Portal do not become dead links.

Consolidation

As part of the ongoing ICT consolidation exercise within Government and MFEI, the IMU assisted MITA in migrating additional ICT services and systems on to the MITA consolidated environment.

In February 2009, the first important milestone was achieved in consolidating the MFEI departments with MITA. The data and systems on the server housed at the Consumer and Competition Division were migrated onto the MITA consolidated environment and the server was later decommissioned.

During October, the Government Property Division (Joint Office, Estates Management, Finance & Administration and Land Department) were fully consolidated with MITA's IT infrastructure. All PCs and laptops within the Division were joined to the CORP domain and all the data and systems residing on the servers were transferred to the consolidated environment. The servers were later decommissioned. The new setup ensured that GPD now have an ICT set-up within the parameters of government restrictions which is secure and functional at the same time.

Later, in November 2009, following months of testing and continuous technical liaising with MITA, the Trademarks System at the Commerce Division was migrated on to the MITA consolidated environment as well. The Trademarks System is a core system for the Directorate of Industrial Property Registration (IPR) within the Commerce Division. Previously the system was hosted on a small PC server at the Division running an outdated Operating System called Novell which was no longer supported with all inherent risks to the data. The IMU has taken the initiative to commence this migration in order for IPR to have a more secure environment hosting their system and data. The migration of the system and the data was done in such a way so that the whole process was transparent to the users.

Exemptions and Waivers

The IMU received a number of ICT requests which due to GM ICT policies required a formal exemption from the MITA ICT Compliance Department in order to be implemented. The process for coordinating the submission and eventual processing of exemptions by MITA was fully coordinated by the ICT Governance Officer within the IMU. During 2009, the IMU processed a total of 65 exemptions.

Training

During the year under review, officers from the IMU benefited from the following training:

- Developing Senior IT Executive Capacity through Service Excellence - a training workshop sponsored by the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation (CFTC) of the Commonwealth Secretariat.
- Two training workshops organised by the European Patent Office on Information Systems currently in use by the Commerce Division.
- Microsoft Executive Briefing on e-Government services.
- Training in SAP Business Objects using Web Intelligence and Universe Design.

The IMU was also invited and participated through its officers, in a number of local conferences and/or seminars dealing with IT Security, Virtualisation, Unified Communications and Collaborative tools.

ICT Awareness programme for employees

As part of its effort to provide end user ICT training and support, the Information Management Unit continued with the initiative of the ICT Awareness Programme which was launched in 2008. Another series of short, focused and easy to follow publications were circulated to all users within the Ministry. The intention is that through these publications, users are educated and/or trained on specific ICT topics. Seven publications have been published in 2009 and dealt with the following topics:

- Microsoft Outlook PST files
- File Compression and archiving
- PC Housekeeping tips
- Ergonomics
- Generic Emails
- Using your Outlook 2003 Calendar
- Email threats and related malware

ICT Support for the National Budget 2010

The IMU managed the Ministry's ICT requirements for the preparation of the National Budget 2010. The support commenced weeks prior to the budget as well as during Budget Day itself. The main tasks included the coordination for the provision of dedicated technical support to the Ministry, the allocation of additional and standby hardware, real time updating of the Ministry's web portal with the Budget publications, domain name registration and support on the budget website.

Representation on Boards

The IMU, through the CIO, participated in a number of boards and councils during the year. These included among others, the DAS Replacement Project Board, the SEPA Project Board, the CIO Council and the CIO Forum.

Setting up of MFEI as a DIMIC

The Internal Market Information (IMI) system was set up by the European Commission in collaboration with Member States to facilitate communication between Competent Authorities of the thirty EEA countries. The Commerce Division is the National Coordinator of IMI in Malta and has the overall responsibility for the implementation of the IMI application as required by the Services Directive.

In view of the fact that the IMI is an electronic system, the office of the CIO was delegated with the responsibility to act as a Delegated IMI Coordinator (DIMIC) for services falling within the Ministry's respective area/s of responsibility. DIMICs and subsequently the IMU had the responsibility to register Competent Authorities in the system, manage their data, monitor progress of requests and assist in case of problems.

European Social Fund Application

The CIOs of MFEI and OPM teamed up to submit a joint application through the Centre for Policy Research and Training (CPRT) to tap EU funding in order to provide Specialist ICT training for staff in Information Management Units and other ICT personnel.

The project, entitled *Strengthening IMUs and other related functions through specialist training*, was submitted under Priority Axis 4 of the Operational programme II – Empowering people for more jobs and a better quality of Life. In November, the Planning and Priorities Coordination Division approved the application for co-financing. The funding available for this project amounts to approximately 2 million euro over a three and a half year period. Work on this project will commence in early 2010.

LEMIS

In September, the Department of Contracts awarded the tender for the Land and Estate Management Information System (LEMIS). Following the award, the IMU was involved in a series of meetings between the Government Property Division, MITA and the supplier to agree on a project implementation plan and finalise the contract. The project is targeted to commence in early 2010.

Services Directive

The Services Directive requires Member States to provide for the completion of all authorisation procedures electronically as well as the provision of the relevant information to enable would-be service providers to apply for an authorisation. These responsibilities were assigned to the Competent Authorities (CA) responsible for the licensing schemes identified in Malta, and therefore Competent Authorities are required to:

- Identify and organise all relevant information necessary for would-be service providers and service recipients, and ensure it is clearly structured and easily available.
- Collate all relevant information and ensure that it is kept updated through regular review. Responsibility for this review to be clearly assigned to identified officials in each CA.
- Draw up guidelines explaining the requirements for authorisation and the procedures applied in the application process.

In order to provide these services, it was necessary to set up a Website/Portal to give access to information and enable completion of all procedures online. This was done by classifying the different schemes which are operated in Malta under the service sectors as per NACE headings (16 in all) and providing a short description of each with links to the relevant CA and main legislation, as well as to a pdf file containing the required information and guidelines for the application procedures with the relevant application form. This required the inclusion of a new page in the www.gov.mt portal (www.eugo-malta.gov.mt) leading to sixteen new pages, each containing links to information pages in pdf format as well as application forms. In the interim, MITA are evaluating submissions for an e-forms solution for Government, which will cater for the needs of the e-Means part of the Services Directive.

EGPA Conference

Between 2 and 5 September 2009, the Ministry organised the European Group for Public Administration (EGPA) Conference. The IMU was involved, during the organisation of the conference, to oversee the provision of all IT and related equipment as well as the provision of graphic design services. The subject of the conference was *The Public Service: Service Delivery in the Information Age*. The IMU also assisted the organisers of the conference in setting up the conference website www.egpa2009.com

ICT Support to Customs

The IMU works constantly with Malta Customs to assist and eventually finance the ICT systems required by the Customs Division. During 2009, the IMU assisted Customs in implementing the following:

- deployment of an extension to the Export Control System;
- signing of the Contract with Steria to implement the Single Administrative Document on the e-Customs system;
- compilation of the Single Administrative Document (SAD) by Steria;
- implementation of the Customs Risk Management System;
- the evaluation process for the selection of the Excise Movement Control System;
- establishing the hardware and maintenance support required to host the eBISCUS Suite comprising the Tariff System, TARIC System, Manifest, and Reference Tables;
- general support to users and traders on Customs Information Systems;
- debugging of errors on Information Systems when these arise.

Used Vehicle Valuation Web Portal

The IMU assisted the Financial Policy Development and Analysis Directorate within the Ministry and the Malta Transport Authority in improving the functionality of the new web portal, to allow second-hand car dealers and private importers to obtain indicative vehicle registration tax due on car imports both from EU and non-EU countries. In 2010 the portal will also include data for motorcycles. The portal is available at <http://www.valuation.vehicleregistration.gov.mt>

ALBERT VELLA
Chief Information Officer

Tax, Pay and Social Welfare Policy Directorate

BACKGROUND

The Tax, Pay and Social Welfare Policy Directorate was set up in November 2006 to contribute to enhanced economic and financial well-being by ensuring that professional standards of financial management apply across Government, by promoting tax, welfare and expenditure policies that improve the quality and cost-effectiveness of public service delivery and make for a tax and benefit system that is fair, equitable and efficient. In addition, a consultation and policy formulation capacity concerning the financial services sector was introduced and implemented within the Directorate.

ASSIGNMENTS UNDERTAKEN

Tax Policy

The Directorate firmly embedded itself as the policy vehicle which links the Ministry with the revenue collecting line departments. Hence the Directorate continued on its mission to refer policy issues, both domestic as well as those which form part of our international obligations, to the Directorate by the VAT, Inland Revenue and Customs Departments for direction and formulation. Several consultations were carried out with potentially impacted sectors of the business community and the feedback was recorded, so as to be able to formulate policy proposals which incorporate such views. The Directorate has also attended various working party/group meetings at EU Commission and Council level on diverse issues such as the intra-EU recovery of tax revenue and green taxation. Malta's position for each of such meetings was constructed after the necessary consultation with line departments and other Government entities.

The Directorate works closely with other departments/entities both within the Ministry and across Government to assist in the establishing of rates which are not solely aimed at generating revenue but also take into consideration the prevailing social, environmental and commercial realities. The Directorate was directly involved in the closure of a number of infringement proceedings instituted by the Commission.

Motor Vehicle Tax Reform

The motor vehicle registration and annual circulating tax reform was a primary issue which has taken up a substantial part of the Division's resources. The first phase of the motor vehicle tax reform addressed the M1 sector which concerns the passenger car sector, while the second phase addressed the M2 and M3 as well as the N1, N2 and N3 sectors that sum up the commercial sector.

The Motor Vehicles Registration and Licensing Act was brought into force on 1 January 2009, and addressed the passenger car sector (M1). Throughout 2009, the new system was monitored and fine-tuned in order to ensure its smooth running vis-à-vis the impact it has on the stakeholders. Thus, a number of diverse and conflicting issues were considered. These included the existing fleets of vehicles, new and used registrations, as well as the wider impact on stakeholders such as the concerns of the dealers and importers, environmental issues, the impact on the business sector and the obvious effect on government revenue brought about by any new proposal. This was done in collaboration with a motor vehicle valuation company of international repute which assisted in the valuation process of used vehicles and the online hosting of a website to provide data to the taxpayer.

During 2009, the Directorate also overhauled the rest of the motor vehicle registration and licensing sector, known as ‘commercial vehicles’. The relevant amendments were brought into force on 1 January 2010 and within the deadline given to the Commission. Whilst the underlying principles were also based on the polluter pays system, it was felt that the tax criteria should be different to those adopted in the passenger vehicles sector and should reflect the diverse use of commercial vehicles as well as the potential for emissions.

Pay and Social Welfare Policy

The Directorate was also involved in a number of initiatives and reports drawn up in conjunction with other government bodies.

Financial Services Policy

During the year under review, the Directorate expanded its activities to incorporate a structured financial services policy formulation capability. The Directorate participated in a number of committees and working groups within the European Council and Commission including:

- Financial Services Committee which assists the European Council to define the medium and long-term strategy for financial services issues;
- European Banking Committee which assists the European Commission in adopting and implementing measures for EU Directives and provides advice on policy issues related to banking activities;
- European Securities Committee which assists the European Commission in adopting implementing measures for EU Directives and provides advice on policy issues in the securities field.

IMAN SCHEMBRI

Director (Tax, Pay and Social Welfare Policy)

Financial Policy Development and Analysis Directorate

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Following a review of all financial regulations and circulars, work continued on consolidating the financial management framework, with a view to updating the respective legislation, namely the Financial Administration and Audit Act and subsidiary legislation, namely the General Financial Regulations. The main objectives of this exercise will be to:

- modernise the financial management system across public administration;
- enable public sector managers to manage better, and being held more accountable;
- ensure the timely provision of quality information; and
- eliminate the waste in the use of public assets.

This process will be a priority area in the 2010-2011 period with a view to introduce the necessary amendments in the coming years.

Transport

In the course of 2009, the Directorate became responsible for the Fleet Management System (FMS) which is a system that is being currently installed across all government ministries and departments. It is planned that in future this system will be installed also across all public sector organisations. The FMS allows Government to manage its fleet more efficiently. The current main functions of this system are fuel management, maintenance and repairs. As announced in the 2010 budget speech, Government is committed to publishing its carbon dioxide emissions. In this respect the FMS will provide supporting information related to carbon dioxide emissions by government transport. This is in line also with the objectives set by the Air Quality Plan published by the Ministry for Infrastructure, Transport and Communications, namely a reduction in vehicle emissions, modal shift and promoting cleaner technologies.

In view of the importance of this policy area, with over €11.0 million being voted for 2010, a specific unit was set up within the Directorate in 2009. The replacement and disposal programme that was embarked upon was consolidated in 2009, with a view to Government having a cleaner, newer and smaller fleet of vehicles. A circular related to the purchase of fully-expensed vehicles by retiring officers was also issued in 2009.

In 2010, it is planned to consolidate the implementation of the FMS by its implementation by the Police and the Armed Forces. Additionally, the reporting framework and fuel usage verification will be consolidated. There are also plans to centralise the disposal of surplus vehicles or those which are beyond economical use or repair. The Directorate will also start to assess the feasibility of overhauling the procurement of vehicles and explore the feasibility of leasing and insuring government-owned vehicles. Such work will be carried out between 2010 and 2011.

Utilities and telephony

Expenditure by ministries and departments amounted to an estimated €26.7 million in 2009, including water, electricity and telephony. Benchmarks were established under an initiative whereby ministries and

departments contribute to the planting of trees, with a view towards reducing carbon dioxide emissions and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Discussions with mobile telephone service providers continued during 2009, with a view to having a service-wide agreement. It is hoped to finalise this agreement in 2010. An inventory of carbon emissions by individual government departments and entities will be carried out in collaboration with the Ministry for Resources and Rural Affairs. The objective is to establish the level of carbon dioxide emissions in order to establish targets through which such emissions will be decreased in the coming years.

Obesity

The Directorate represented the Ministry on the Intersectoral Committee to Counteract Obesity (ICCO), which is responsible for:

- translating measures outlined in the European Charter on counteracting Obesity(2006) into a series of specific sectoral and intersectoral objectives and implementation strategies, within an appropriate timescale and priority ranking as defined in a working plan (action plan);
- ensuring close collaboration and consistency of action regarding food and nutrition as described in The Malta Food and Nutrition Policy (1988);
- making proposals to Government on any matters related to its functions;
- reporting regularly to the Authorities on progress achieved.

Several meetings were held with the Public Health Regulation Division and a plan of action was agreed to. This led to an initial vote equal to €150,000 being voted in Budget 2010 in order to draw up a strategy on obesity. The strategy will aim at furthering research in this area and proposing targets that are socially and economically viable in order to effectively reduce the level of obesity in the adult and young population.

Late Payments

Numerous payments in commercial transactions among businesses or between enterprises and public authorities are made after delivery and frequently later than arranged in general commercial conditions. These habits impact liquid assets and complicate the financial management of businesses. Furthermore, overdue payments by public authorities weaken the credibility of policies and makes operating conditions for businesses unstable and unpredictable, thereby hindering growth and employment.

In the course of 2009, the Directorate was assigned responsibility for examining a proposal by the European Commission for replacing and repealing Directive 2000/35/EC: Combating Late Payment in Commercial Transactions, proposing amendments to it and attending Working Party Competitiveness and Growth meetings. Moreover, several meetings and consultations were held with various stakeholders in order to set Malta's position in this regard. Consultations with the business community were led by the Enterprise Policy Directorate.

Plans are underway to initiate an exercise in 2010, in order to identify the time taken by Government to settle outstanding invoices. The objective is to entrench financial responsibility across all the public sector by engaging in better financial planning and execution.

Insurance

In the course of 2009 the Ministry, through the financial policy development and analysis directorate, started evaluating the cost-effectiveness of introducing insurance cover against medical malpractice; and on government-owned vehicles and government property.

In this respect, the Directorate carried out some background analysis where an insurance specialist was appointed in order to assist Government to determine the feasibility of insuring against these risks. The priority area identified was medical malpractice. In the course of 2009 contact was established with the

Health Care Services Division within the Ministry for Social Policy in order to identify target groups. Background research was also carried out in order to explore the practice of other EU member countries in this regard. Work on this area will be consolidated in 2010.

Funding of Public Broadcasting

The Directorate was assigned the task of looking into the funding of the Public Broadcasting Services Ltd (PBS), which is currently funded by revenue generated through commercial activities and funds provided by Government through the Public Service Obligation agreement that had been signed between PBS and Government.

In 2009 the Directorate, in conjunction with the Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, started identifying a number of options that could be used to fund the PBS in the future. An analytical review of the financial position of PBS was carried out in order to establish a benchmark and provide assistance in the shorter term.

Background research was also carried out to identify existing methods by which national broadcasting stations are funded in other EU member countries. It is planned that work on the funding of the PBS will be intensified in 2010 with a view that a new mechanism will be established by 2011.

BUDGETARY MEASURES

Vehicle Registration Tax and Licensing

The reformed motor vehicle registration and licensing regime for cars and motorcycles came into effect on 1 January 2009. The new taxation system is based on carbon dioxide and particulate matter emissions, together with the length and registration value of a vehicle. The registration value is determined in terms of Cap 368, Motor Vehicles Registration and Licensing Act.

During the year, the Directorate was responsible for enhancing the mechanism by which the registration values are calculated and the system now includes motorcycles, mileage and month of registration. The registration values are published by the Authority for Transport in Malta through the official Malta Transport Authority Motor Vehicle Registration site (eReg) portal. This portal won the Good Practice Label by the European Commission in recognition of proven credibility, excellence and scope of research. The vehicle registration and licensing system (www.vehicleregistration.gov.mt) allows motor vehicle agents, dealers as well as the public a number of services related to vehicle registration, including access to the registration value and registration tax of over 40,000 models. The registration values are published on the basis of local market evidence.

During 2009, the technical proposal for the reform of commercial vehicles (N1, N2, and N3 categories) and M2/M3 vehicles was presented with the aim of bringing the regime into effect as of 1 January 2010. For commercial vehicles the registration tax is calculated on the N category, euro standard and Gross Vehicle Weight (GVW).

It is expected that a significant proportion of the Directorate's efforts in 2010 will continue to be dedicated to the fine-tuning of the system and collection of data.

Other measures

The Directorate was also responsible for the drafting and administration of a grant scheme whereby officially recognised sport associations can benefit from a grant of 15.25% on the capital expenditure incurred on their sport facilities.

Another budgetary measure which the Directorate helped implementing was the deduction, for income tax purposes, of the membership fee paid by those parents who send their children to recognised sport associations, with the deduction being capped at €100.

OTHER

EGPA 2009 Conference

The Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Investment co-hosted the Annual European Group for Public Administration (EGPA) between 2 and 5 September 2009. This conference was attended by over 400 participants. The theme of the conference was *The Public Service: Service Delivery in the Information Age*. The Directorate was responsible for the logistics and assisted in the preparation of this conference. Related information is available at www.egpa2009.com

Pandemic Preparedness

In the course of 2009, this Directorate continued representing the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Investment on the National Pandemic Preparedness Committee (PPC). This was integrated with the Civil Protection Council (CPC) which is chaired by the Minister for Justice and Home Affairs. The committee is made up of high-ranking officials from various ministries as well as a representative from the Opposition.

Investment Facility

During 2009 the Directorate continued representing Malta as member on the Investment Facility Committee (European Investment Bank). The Investment Facility (IF) is a revolving fund, i.e. loan amortisations will be re-invested in new operations.

The IF provides various forms of risk sharing financing instruments for investment projects in most sectors of the economy. This includes projects in the commercially run public sector and in the infrastructure sector which are key to the development of the private sector, as well as the financial sector. IF support is provided through: debt finance; guarantees; equity-type financing; and acting as an investor in private equity funds. All projects funded by the IF must be economically, financially, technically and environmentally viable.

HERALD BONNICI

Director (Financial Policy Development and Analysis)

Consumer and Competition Division

ORGANISATION STRUCTURE

The Division encompasses four directorates namely the:

- Competition Directorate, responsible for the application and enforcement of competition law;
- Consumer Affairs Directorate, which is responsible for mediating between consumers and traders, disseminating information regarding consumers' rights and education;
- Operations Directorate responsible for monitoring of prices in specific sectors, such as medicines and foodstuffs; and
- Enforcement Directorate, responsible for the enforcement of the price indications and price monitoring.

The Consumer and Competition Division also incorporates the Office for Fair Competition and Department of Consumer Affairs in terms of the Competition Act (Cap. 379) and the Consumers' Affairs Act (Cap. 378).

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR GENERAL

European Consumer Centre - Malta

The European Consumer Centre of Malta (ECC) is part of the European Consumer Centres network with offices throughout all EU member States, Iceland and Norway. The underlying objective of the network is to enhance consumer confidence in the Internal Market. In 2009, the ECC submitted an application to the European Commission for a grant covering 50% of its operative costs for 2010. The application was successful and the grant agreement was signed in December 2009. Since the Centre has been nominated as the Article 21 designated body as of 2010, its tasks have been extended to provide information to service recipients for the purposes of the Services Directive.

Promotional Activities

Collection of information on EU and national laws

The Centre researched and collected information on a number of laws of interest to consumers. The information was simplified to form the basis of the new website which the Centre envisages to launch in 2010. Topics researched were air passenger rights, rail passenger rights, timeshare, consumer credit, payment methods, purchasing of cars from other member states, classification of accommodation establishments, and, the European Small Claims procedure.

The Centre also issued the following publications:

- Education material on the sale of consumer goods and guarantees;
- A booklet and bookmarks with comprehensive information on the purchasing of a vehicle from another Member State;
- Flyers and sign on 'Howard' an interactive web application to assist consumers in deciding whether a particular website is trustworthy or otherwise;
- An annual report for the ECC for 2008;
- A contribution to the Network's 2008 Annual Report.

Cooperation with other stakeholders in the field of consumer protection

The ECC also liaised with a number of stakeholders in the field of consumer protection in Malta in order to discuss a variety of issues of relevance to consumers:

- The Consumer and Competition Division: air passenger rights, the organisation and performance of a Scams Awareness campaign;
- Lotteries and Gaming Authority: case handling, request to discuss the possibility of notifying the Authority as an ADR in the field of gaming;
- Malta Communications Authority: Euro-Label trust-mark, notification as an ADR;
- Malta Tourism Authority: timeshare, hotel classification, guest accidents in hotels.

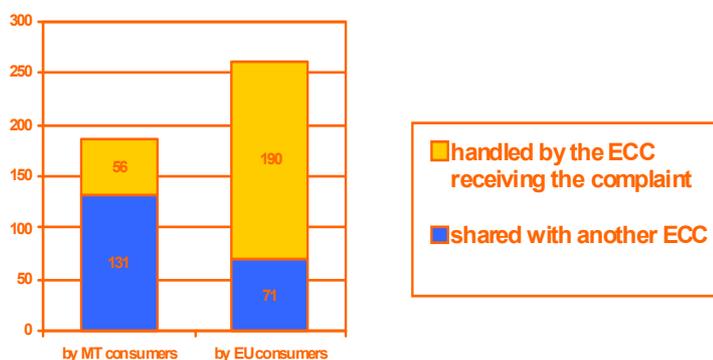
Direct Provision of Information

A fundamental role of the ECC is that of providing clear and timely information. In 2009 ECC Malta addressed 3,590 enquiries, a substantial increase from the 2,256 received in 2008. Out of these, 995 were directly related to the ECC. The other 2,595 enquiries were consumer-related but did not fall within the competence of the Centre and were forwarded to other organisations, mainly the Consumer and Competition Division. Out of the 995 enquiries handled, 557 were information requests logged in the Commission's IT tool. The remaining were classified as complaints or handled otherwise due to their nature.

Assisting a Consumer with a Complaint/Dispute

In its grant application, ECC Malta had envisaged a case load of 195 complaints for 2009. Effectively, the ECC handled 261 complaints from EU consumers against Malta-based businesses and 187 complaints from Maltese consumers against businesses based in other EU member states for a total of 448 cases. This figure significantly exceeds the amount handled in 2008.

ECC Malta was directly involved in the handling of 258 of these cases either exclusively or in conjunction with another ECC. In the remaining cases, the Centre was informed of the problem by the ECC receiving the complaint against a Maltese business. These did not necessitate the Centre's direct intervention.



Networking and Feedback

Statistics

A log of all enquiries received is kept and statistic exercises collected monthly. Furthermore, ECC Malta also forms part of the ECC IT Tool Key User Group which deals with the development of a database for use by the ECC Network.

Joint Research Projects

In 2009 the Centre participated in four joint research projects of the network on air passenger rights, prepaid mobile telephony cards, hotel classifications, and a price comparison of high street brands. The Centre also contributed to a joint project on ADR which started in 2008.

Participation in consultations at EU and national level

In 2009, the Centre received a total of 67 requests for information from the Commission. It also received numerous requests on a variety of issues from other Centres within the network as well as from other organisations and research companies.

Enforcement – Administrative proceedings

With regard to administrative enforcement, investigations and administrative proceedings in terms 12A and 14A of the Consumer Affairs Act were carried out in a number of cases related to unfair commercial practices issues. Such cases included one instance against a service provider (telephony – fixed and mobile, internet and television) which action eventually stimulated a unilateral withdrawal of a charge and a commitment to refund those consumers who had already paid such charge. In another case, the service provider (mobile telephony) tariffs were investigated and concurrently administrative proceedings were instituted due to the presence of misleading actions and misleading omissions, an administrative decision according to which the service provider was fined. In yet another case, the advertisement and promotion adopted by a service provider (mobile telephony) gave the consumer misleading information that materially distorted the economic behaviour of the average consumer, and omitted material information that is necessary for the consumer to take a transactional decision, in this case the administrative proceedings and the concurrent interim measure were issued.

World Consumer Rights Day

The theme chosen for 2009 was *Advertising: Fact or Fiction?* This theme complemented that chosen by Consumers International which emphasised the importance of healthy eating. The aim of the event was to inform consumers on their rights.

The Minister of Finance, the Economy and Investment launched the event during a press conference wherein he also emphasised the importance of identification and exposure of scams. Scam boxes were distributed to local councils for use by consumers and the material received was analysed. An analogous event was organised in Gozo.

COMPETITION DIRECTORATE

The Directorate is responsible for handling complaints regarding potential infringements of competition legislation. The Directorate advises the Director General regarding the exercise of his powers under the various laws and draws up reports and issues formal decisions on the basis of investigations conducted.

Complaints

A total of 18 cases are being investigated by the OFC, seven of which were newly submitted complaints referring to alleged infringements of the Competition Act concerning *inter alia* communications, provision of services, insurance and others.

The office received an informal complaint on CFLs concerning the scheme from importers participating in the Scheme. The Office eventually decided to look into matter and concluded the case.

Investigations

Investigations carried out further to specific complaints concerned primarily the following markets:

- Concerted Practices (Art. 5 infringements):
 - Port services;
 - Retail.

- Abuse of dominance (Art. 9 infringements):
 - Port services;
 - Access to essential facility;
 - Communications;
 - Energy;
 - Transport;
 - Insurance.
- Examined under both Art. 5 and Art. 9:
 - Insurance

Decisions

During 2009, the Office for Fair Competition delivered four decisions. These decisions concerned the provision of services at yacht marinas; provision of insurance cover, price discrimination in tariff surcharge in the energy sector and the grant of licences for double-deckers. Four complaints concerning communications, groupage cargo, transport and the media sectors were dismissed since the complainants did not substantiate their allegations. In another two instances (mobile telephony and the food and liquid waste sectors), the complainants did not pursue the matter.

Using the newly adopted method for commercial dispute resolution, the office managed to bring about a settlement in connection with a case of refusal to supply in the flour market.

Concentrations

LN 294 of 2002 (Control of Concentrations Regulations) requires that in specific circumstances undertakings are to notify the office and, if the proposed Concentration does not present any competition law concerns, the Office gives its go ahead for the business transaction to proceed. The Office gives its consent to such a go-ahead after conducting an analysis on the effects of such a transaction on the relevant market. Therefore, businesses planning such a venture frequently request pre-notification meetings with the Directorate for advice. In this respect the office conducted meetings and where appropriate drew up reports. Such reports included the gaming, insurance and communication sectors.

Advice Tendered

Tendering advice continues to be another important aspect of the work carried out by the Directorate. In 2009, government departments, local authorities, law and accountancy firms, businesses and individual consumers sought advice from the Directorate on competition issues. Such advice is also tendered to foreign companies and law firms.

Advice tendered mainly dealt with the following issues:

- Motor Vehicle Registration Tax;
- Privatisation of yacht marinas which are currently administered by the Malta Maritime Authority;
- Communications;
- Sports Rights;
- Transport Coaches,
- Scheme to promote the domestic use of compact lamps;
- Regulatory competences.

Cases before the Commission for Fair Trading (CFT)

The Directorate represents the OFC in cases before the CFT when an undertaking asks for a revision of the complaint before the CFT. During 2009, the Directorate represented the OFC in the following sectors: transport, communications, television and marine services.

Review of Reports

The Directorate expressed its position on various papers or working documents including:

- negotiations with the USA on consumer protection;
- codification exercise of Council Regulation applying rules of competition to transport by rail, road and inland waterway, and the codification exercise of Council Regulation on the application of Article 81 (3) of the Treaty to certain categories of agreements, decisions and concerted practices between liner shipping companies;
- White Paper on Competition Collective Redress and Class Actions; and
- Green Paper on Consumer Collective Redress and Class Actions.

This Office was also involved in the Consumer Rights Directive.

Cooperation with other Local Authorities/Organisations

During the year the Directorate conducted several meetings with various regulatory authorities and organisations. These meetings were either informative with the scope of keeping up to date with developments in specific markets or complaint related. With reference to the latter, the Directorate held several meetings to examine specific complaints and determine the best placed authority to conduct an investigation. An example is the Malta Resources Authority (MRA).

OFC officials held various discussions on matters of mutual interest with other sectoral organisations including the Malta Financial Services Authority, Central Bank, MRA and the MCA. A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed with MRA.

Collaboration with MUESAC

The Directorate, together with MUESAC, organised an information meeting for stakeholders in the motor vehicle sector with regard to the motor vehicle block exemption regulation.

Relations with the European Commission and other International Organisations

The Directorate became heavily involved in international fora. The OFC's full participation within the European Competition Network (ECN) established under Regulation 1/2003, the Global Forum on Competition within OECD and the International Competition Network (ICN) has been reactivated.

Officials within the Directorate regularly attended meetings organised within the ECN framework.. The Directorate was also appointed as rapporteur.

OPERATIONS DIRECTORATE

The main functions of the Directorate are to monitor the prices of medicines to verify whether these are fair and reasonable, and to monitor the prices of consumer products, mainly food items, in order to detect any collusive practice amongst traders which may be to the detriment of the consumer. The Directorate was also entrusted with the disbursement of the subsidy granted to bakers for the production of the Maltese-type bread.

Price of Medicines

The basis of the price mechanism is external price referencing, whereby the price of each medicine is compared to an average price of 12 European countries. The pharmaceutical market is dynamic since prices are subject to frequent changes, especially in some reference countries. National pricing regulatory systems are also subject to change. These aspects, together with the exchange rate of the local currency

against the euro, prompted the Directorate to carry out a new pricing exercise to establish the new average prices. As a first step, the average price of the 116 medicines, the price of which exceeded the average and for which no agreement was reached with the importer, was calculated again. The results showed that the calculated average price had decreased in 70% of the cases.

Apart from the above, another 241 medicines were checked and the prices of 65 were found to be higher than the average price. The number of medicines that have decreased in price in 2009 was three. The decrease in the consumer price varied between 7% to 27%.

The Directorate performed 346 inspections in private pharmacies related to medicinal pricing and investigated 27 complaints lodged by consumers. During these inspections, data was compiled regarding the composition, presentation and the consumer price of 1,801 medicinals. Concurrently, the prices of medicines were monitored and where necessary investigated. Where it was found that the consumer had been overcharged, the Directorate ensured that the consumer was refunded and that the respective medicine price was corrected.

The Directorate compiled and provided information on the prices of pre-selected categories of medicinal products related to the INFOPRICE project, which is spearheaded by the Directorate-General Enterprise and Industry within the European Commission. The project aims at improving the availability, exchange and comparison of pharmaceutical pricing between Member States, as well as EEA-EFTA countries. The data is compiled twice yearly and analysed with a view to facilitate benchmarking and price comparisons at EU level.

Market Analysis

The Operations Directorate inspected 12 supermarkets on a monthly basis and another supermarket was visited on a bimonthly basis. A total of 150 inspections were carried out during 2009, in order to monitor the consumer price trends of 330 consumer products considered to be market leaders in their relevant sector, namely in the food, beverages and toiletries sectors.

Apart from the actual consumer price, the Directorate also monitored the recommended retail prices of the same category of products. This was carried out in order to ensure that supermarkets did not mislead consumers by increasing the recommended retail price set by the importer giving the impression that the consumers were being offered a higher discount.

From the analysis of the data collected, it transpires that some products are cheaper in one supermarket while other products are cheaper in other supermarkets. It should be noted that this situation was also noticed in supermarkets in some other EU member states. This makes it harder for customers to determine which supermarket is actually offering the best price deals. From a study carried out by the Directorate on a basket of 90 products, it resulted that there was a 6% difference in the total cost between the highest and lowest priced supermarkets that are monitored. Therefore the Directorate is attempting to ensure that any claimed recommended retail prices are consistent across Malta. This will eventually help consumers to evaluate the discounted prices prior to their purchases, from the respective retail outlets.

Dolceta website

In March 2009, a presentation was delivered by the Directorate during the launching of modules 3 and 4 of the Dolceta Project which is funded by the European Commission.

Bakers' subsidy

Subsidies to bakers amounting to €140,656 were disbursed in 2009. The 45 bakers who utilised light heating oil for the production of Maltese bread benefitted from the subsidy as per agreement reached between the Bakers Union and the Ministry. The objective of the subsidy was to maintain a level playing

field between bakers utilising gas heating and others utilising light heating oil for their furnaces. The rate of subsidy was equal to the already existing subsidy of liquefied petroleum gas. Each baker utilising light heating oil received a subsidy that was proportional to the amount of flour purchased to produce Maltese bread. The subsidy was terminated at the end of July 2009, when the prices of liquefied petroleum gas reflected production cost.

Following the liberalisation of the Maltese-type bread, two exercises were carried out in the first five months of the year in 96 bakeries to collect prices and analyse the price variations and trends nationally. After the variance in prices of the first months of the year, the market seemed to settle down and the consumer price for the large loaf varied €0.05 between the different bakeries.

ENFORCEMENT DIRECTORATE

Price Indication Regulations

The Directorate carried out 14,828 visits in the various retail outlets. In total 146 warning letters were issued and legal action taken in three instances. Warning letters were issued to 92 retail outlets, 22 hawkers in open-air markets and 32 vegetable hawkers.

Price Indication – Vegetable Hawkers and Open-air Markets

Price indication surveillance was carried out at open-air markets in a number of localities. Results were as outlined below:

Category	Number of Inspections	Compliant	Non-Compliant
Retail Outlets	11,882	11,786	96
Vegetable Hawkers	644	609	35
Open-air Markets	2,302	2,238	64

Price Indication – Cars

The Directorate contacted the three major car importers associations in order to compile an exhaustive database of all car sellers. This was done to ensure that all operators in the sector are compliant with the Price Indication Regulations.

Price Indication – Feasts, Jewellers and Perfumeries

During August, the Directorate carried out price indication investigations at jewellery and perfumery shops and during feasts, the results of which are listed in the table hereunder:

Visits carried out at Feasts, Jewellers & Perfumeries					
Feasts		Jewellers		Perfumeries	
Compliant	Non-Compliant	Compliant	Non-Compliant	Compliant	Non-Compliant
30	18	56	15	0	13

Price Monitoring

Five leading supermarkets asked to submit consumer purchasing patterns for a selection of brands on a sales volume basis. Analysis of this information was used to compile a list of fast moving items: soft drinks, beers, wine, tinned food, tea, coffee, sauces, pasta, rice, baby food, cereals, oils and butter, fresh dairy products, frozen and chilled meat, frozen foods, sugar, sweets and snacks, detergents and toiletries. The prices of these commodities are being monitored monthly from the following establishments:

- 12 Supermarkets - 252 fixed commodities;
- 18 Butchers - 34 fixed items;

- 67 Restaurants - monitoring 730 items;
- 42 Kiosks - monitoring 347 products.

Exercise on the Prices of Solar Water Heaters/White Goods

The Directorate started monitoring the prices of solar water heaters and white goods. Prices of 125 solar water heaters from 32 importers/traders were monitored. As regards white goods, a total of 559 items from 27 shops were examined. During this exercise Surveillance Officers also checked for compliance with the Price Indication Regulations.

Complaints/Court Cases

During 2009, the Directorate investigated 121 complaints: 85 were on price indication, 32 cases indicated an abuse on misleading prices and the remaining four did not necessitate any further action. Furthermore, the Police Citations Office was asked to initiate proceedings against three commercial establishments for having violated the Price Indication Regulations. Two cases resulted in an acquittal and the other resulted in a fine. One case from 2008 is still pending.

Exercise on the Monitoring of January Sales

The Enforcement Directorate undertook an exercise to monitor January sales in the clothing sector. Three criteria were taken into account: (1) the presentation of the discounted price as the final price, (2) a clear indication of the price and (3) the awareness of consumer rights when purchasing a discounted item. The following table lists visits made according to locality:

Locality	No of Outlets visited	Final Discounted Price		Items on sale clearly marked		Conditions of Sale	
		Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Valletta	16	11	5	11	5	12	4
Sliema	13	9	4	11	2	11	2
Mosta	10	5	5	9	1	9	1
Paola	10	6	4	10	0	10	0
Baystreet	7	3	4	3	4	7	0
Victoria Gozo	7	6	1	7	0	1	6
	63	40	23	51	12	50	13

All outlets were found to be compliant after the second visit.

Pricing of advertised flights and package tours

The Directorate audits promotional material related to travel in local newspapers. This audit is carried out in order to check that adverts appearing in the local newspapers are in line with the provisions of the Consumer Affairs Act relative to the Unfair Commercial Practices (Articles 51A to 51J). Presently the Directorate is checking that the final price is inclusive of all taxes.

During the year, an extensive audit was carried out on promotional material on travel material appearing in the local newspapers in order to identify any misleading adverts. Travel agents were informed on the requirements of the law. An administrative fine letter was delivered in July and two compliance orders were served to defaulting travel agents. It has been noticed that instances of misleading adverts have been effectively diminished.

CONSUMER AFFAIRS DIRECTORATE

Complaints handling

During 2009, 2,482 complaints were lodged with the Directorate. Following is a detailed breakdown of complaints registered at the Directorate.

Category	Registered
Advertising	12
Brown Goods	171
Computers	107
Construction	148
Cosmetics	7
Distance Selling	5
Door step Contract	5
Furniture	123
Household goods electric	481
Household goods non electric	120
Insurance & Finance	8
Leisure	229
Personal Accessories	199
Pricing & Schemes	12
Professional Services	55
Public Utilities	19
Safety	6
Telecommunications	543
Textiles	62
Toys & Infants Goods	9
Transport	115
Unfair Contract Terms	46
Total	2,482

Enforcement

Article 25A of the Consumer Affairs Act

During the year, 62 traders who failed to honour the Arbiter's decision within the stipulated three month period were issued with a court summons by the police. 26 Consumer Claims Tribunal decisions were honoured before the expiry of the three month period, six were honoured at Court, two were withdrawn by consumers, four cases could not be notified by the police, five traders were issued a fine by the presiding magistrate for non-compliance and a case was appealed by a consumer but was not upheld by Court. The remaining cases are still pending.

Consumer Policy meetings abroad

Meetings were attended on a number of issues that ranged from Consumer Experts Groups to workshops and other consumer policy related topics. The following is a list of the meetings attended:

- Consumer Complaints Expert Group meetings
- EU Sweep meetings
- Consumer Policy Network (CPN) meetings
- Consumer Protection Cooperation (CPC) meetings, workshops and training sessions
- Europa Diary Partners meeting
- Workshops on Credit Agreements for Consumers
- Workshop on Naming and Sanctions
- Conference on Consumer Rights
- European Consumer Summit

Sweep Electronic Equipment

The Directorate participated in a Sweep exercise organised by the Consumer Protection Cooperation Committee of the DG Health & Consumer Protection of the European Commission. Ten websites selling electronic equipment were selected and investigated with the purpose of looking out for infringements and to ensure that the information provided on the respective websites is in line with the Distance Selling Regulation. From the investigations, it transpired that six of these chosen websites needed to be examined further. The establishments behind these six websites were contacted and the traders told to rectify their position. The enforcement phase will be implemented in 2010.

Information to the General Public and Education

During 2009, officers participated in 129 radio programmes on four different stations and 76 television programmes on four different stations.

In addition, 121 articles were published on three different newspapers. Among these articles, one is published as a weekly column every Sunday. Articles were also published in primary and secondary school magazines and 12 write-ups were included in a commercial magazine published monthly. Through this contribution, practical information on consumer issues and case studies are tackled, including also a set of practical consumer tips.

Furthermore, 13 talks were delivered to primary and secondary level students and four talks were delivered to a number of social groups.

Commercial guarantees

In view of the fact that a significant number of complaints tend to centre on the issue of commercial and legal guarantees, an exercise was carried out to monitor the terms and conditions of commercial guarantees in relation to consumer legislation. The aim of this exercise was to raise awareness amongst traders on consumer law and to assist them in updating the terms and conditions so as to be in line with the Consumer Affairs Act. A total of 49 notifications were sent and to date 11 traders have made the necessary updates. Negotiations with the remaining traders are in hand.

Freephone 80074400

In the course of the year, 19,299 telephone enquiries were received from consumers enquiring about their complaints. Officers at this office tender advice to callers and provide guidance as to the best manner in which to solve their complaints. If this proves to be inconclusive, the general public is advised to register their complaint at the Consumer Affairs Directorate for the necessary investigations and mediation to be undertaken.

Europa Diary

The Europa Diary is a publication produced by Generation Europe Foundation and is provided free of charge by the European Commission. The Consumer Affairs Directorate is a partner in this project and assists Generation Europe in the preparation and distribution of this publication. The Diary is designed for students aged 15 to 17 years and has a wealth of information on the European Union, career opportunities, health and safety and environmental issues.

MIREILLE VELLA

Director General (Consumer & Competition)

Commerce Division

INTRODUCTION

The role of the Commerce Division is to assist business and facilitate trade whilst providing the necessary infrastructure to encourage the securing, utilisation and respect of intellectual property rights.

Initiatives aimed at fulfilling this role are undertaken through the concerted efforts of its three directorates namely the Industrial Property Registrations Directorate, the Trade Services Directorate and the Small Businesses and Crafts Directorate assisted ably by its Support Services arm.

OPERATIONS

The Commerce Division performs the following duties:

- registration of trademarks, certification marks, collective marks and designs;
- patenting of inventions;
- issuing of supplementary protection certificates in respect of medicinals and plant protection products;
- issuing of trade licences;
- recording of transfers, cancellations, amendments and renewals regarding trading licences as well as trade marks, patents and designs;
- authorisation of the export and transaction of dual use goods;
- issuing of import licences and export licences;
- administration of EU import quotas;
- administration of temporary state aid for sugar;
- licensing of auctioneers;
- dissemination of information relevant to the business sectors;
- payment of the flour transport subsidy;
- acting as intermediary vis-à-vis complaints and enquiries from businesses about services provided by Government and other entities;
- acting as the National Coordinator (NIMIC) of the Internal Market Information System (IMI);
- running of Crafts Centre in St John Square, Valletta;
- providing support to the Malta Crafts Council, the Copyright Board, the Auctioneers Board and the Trading Licence Advisory Committee;
- hosting the EU SOLVIT Centre for Malta;
- coordinating Malta's participation in the European Enterprise Awards
- coordinating the drafting of legislation relating to trade and intellectual property;
- providing input on drafting of related EU directives and regulations as well as international treaties;
- participating in international and EU meetings as required.

SALIENT STATISTICS FOR 2009

Trade

Applications were received, processed and published in the Government Gazette as follows: 261 new applications for premises based activities, 24 for Reactivation of Licence, 288 for Transfer of Licences, 19 for Transfer by Inheritance, 46 for Market Hawkers, 72 for Street Hawkers, 19 for Buskers, 11 for

Marketing Agents, 65 for Registration of freelance activity non-premises based, 4 for Changes from old to new regime of licences, 21 for Extension of time, 39 for Commercial Fairs, 25 for Car boot sales, and 56 for change or additional activity.

Furthermore 1,433 applications were received for import licences and 40 for export licences. There were also 73 applications for exports of dual-use goods and military equipment.

The Division, through the Trade Services Directorate, testified 576 times in court cases instituted by different authorities including Civil and Criminal courts, Family Courts, MEPA Appeals Tribunal, Local Councils' Tribunals.

Industrial Property

Applications were received as follows:

- 922 for registration of new trademarks, 5 for registration of new designs and 30 for patenting of new inventions;
- 824 for renewal of existing trademarks, 5 for renewal of existing designs and 964 for renewal of existing patents.

Furthermore there were 4,006 Industrial Property searches.

The Commerce Division through its Industrial Property Registrations Directorate was called to testify in court 87 times on intellectual property related issues.

Crafts

Members registered with the Malta Crafts Council as on 31 December 2009, stood at 850 craftsmen and 432 entrepreneurs.

The number of visitors (including locals and tourists) to the local exhibition of crafts at Crafts Centre Valletta was 25,429.

During 2009, the Malta Crafts Council participated in several crafts fairs/exhibitions held locally such as Great Spring Show, Festival Nazzjonali tal-Ghana, Valletta Artisan Fair (as part of World Tourism Day) *Notte Bianca* and others organised by various local councils.

ASSISTING BUSINESS

Business Care Unit

The Commerce Division through the Business Care Unit of the Small Business and Crafts Directorate continued to give first hand assistance and advice to clients who required any service offered by the Division. During 2009, circa 2,399 telephone enquiries and 3,040 personal visits were received at the Business Care Unit mainly in relation to services offered by the Commerce Division.

Malta SOLVIT Centre

As of 1 May 2004, the Commerce Division began hosting the EU SOLVIT Centre for Malta. SOLVIT is a network of centres throughout the EU and EEA, committed to solve cross-border problems which hinder the rights of citizens and Businesses in the Internal Market. The network works through an online database maintained by the EU Commission.

SOLVIT Malta processed 41 enquiries during 2009. Out of these, 37 did not qualify as SOLVIT cases whilst the other four cases were inputted in the SOLVIT database, with Malta acting as Home Centre. Two enquiries received during 2008 were inputted as cases in 2009.

Awareness Activities and meetings with the Business Community

The Commerce Division organised or participated in several seminars or meetings aimed at raising awareness amongst local stakeholders on trade issues, Intellectual Property, Crafts, SOLVIT and the Internal Market Information System. In particular one may mention the following:

- A national seminar with input from Malta Enterprise; the Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Industry and the General Retailers and Traders Union on Intellectual Property Enforcement Matters for Maltese SMEs which was co-financed through EU funds and which also saw the participation of the EU-China IPR Helpdesk.
- An awareness campaign on community trademarks and designs was carried out in the latter part of 2009 through funds made available to this office under the Technical Cooperation Agreement entered into with the Office for Harmonization in the Internal Market (OHIM) – Community Trademarks and Designs.
- Participation in the 2009 edition of the International Fair of Malta. The Commerce Division's stand promoted *inter alia* intellectual property, primarily patents and also included the exhibition of local inventions and crafts. The Commerce Division's stand also provided a focus on the novel service launched by the CD during this event called IP Check-Up, which is a Diagnostic service that the CD is providing to local SMEs for free, where purposely trained officers visit the premises of any interested SME and in full confidence the team advises them through a detailed and methodical report on the SME's IP potential not only for Protection purposes but also, equally important, in order for the SME to strategically exploit its IP potential commercially.

LEGISLATION AND BETTER REGULATION

The Division is regulated in its activities by the following main legislations: the Auctioneers Act; the Commercial Code; the Trading Licences Act 2001; the Supplies and Services Act; the Trade Marks Act; the Copyright Act and the Patents and Designs Act. These are complemented with a significant amount of subsidiary legislations. The following legislation was enacted in 2009:

- The Trading Licences Act was amended in line with Services Directive introducing the possibility of securing a trading licence through a notification;
- The Trading Licence Regulations were amended in 2009 via Legal Notice 226 of 2009 which put in place new conditions in respect to the Gozitan Commercial premises' shop opening hours, allowing the undertaking of various commercial activities on Sundays;
- The Copyright Act was amended to enable accession to the WIPO Copyright Treaty and WIPO Performers and Phonogram Treaty;
- Legal Notice 425 of 2003 on the control of the Establishment and Operation of Societies for the collective Administration of Copyright was amended in order to implement obligations resulting from the Services Directive.

INTERNATIONAL AND EU INITIATIVES

International Instruments

The ratification by the EU and the EU Member States, including Malta, of the WIPO Copyright Treaty (WCT) and the WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty (WPPT), took place on 14 December 2009, at the WIPO HQ in Geneva, with the deposit of Malta's instruments of accession being carried out with the assistance of Malta's Permanent Mission to the UN in Geneva.

The ratification of the treaties – which establish the basic standards of protection for copyright and related rights in the digital environment – will positively influence the development of creativity within the digital environment in Europe and beyond.

These two treaties also mark the first time that the EU is accorded full contracting party status in the field of copyright and related rights.

Participation in EU and International Meetings

Officials from the Division participated in EU and international meetings pertaining to its remit or in order to assist other entities. Meetings concerned the following issues: Sanctions Monitoring, Dual Use Goods, the European Charter for SMEs, Trademark Practice and Procedures, Protection of Designs, Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights, Patents, Copyright, Patent Libraries, Technical Cooperation, Better Regulation, the Internal Market Information System, European Enterprise Awards, Regulation 2679/98 EC on Disruption to the Internal Market and Crafts.

In addition to the above, the Division participated in the General Assembly of the World Intellectual Property Organisation and the meetings of the Administrative Council of the European Patent Office and of the Administrative Board and Budget Committee of the Office of the Harmonisation of the Internal Market, as well as the EPO's Budget and Finance Committee, the Committee on Patent Law and the Technical and Operational Support Committee.

In addition, national judges were given the opportunity to participate in a series of seminars for judges dealing with trademark and design cases organised by the Office for Harmonization in the Internal Market (OHIM) – Community Trademarks and Designs.

BILATERAL COOPERATION INITIATIVES

Cooperation with the Office for the Harmonisation of the Internal Market (Trademarks and Designs)

During 2009, the Commerce Division once more benefited from a Cooperation agreement aimed at increasing awareness on intellectual property rights and in particular the Community Trademarks and Community Designs. Discussions with a view to conclude a similar agreement for 2010 were also initiated.

The Commerce Division is also participating in IT based projects funded by the OHIM for Trademark Classification and Searching services.

Cooperation with the European Patent Office

Malta was the first European country member of the European Patent Office to introduce the SOPRANO system for Patents which is gradually replacing the manual system for the application, processing and granting of patents. During 2009, preparations were finalised with the EPO through the assistance of the Ministry's IMU together with MITA for the upgrading of the EPTOS set, including SOPRANO and the implementation of other software tools in the area of patents as well as for the digitisation of all national patent records. These tools, which include access to patent databases, documentation management systems, and online filing amongst others, as well as the digitisation process would serve to offer a more overall efficient service in the area of patents.

Other projects falling under the EPO-CD National Action Plan for Malta for the years 2008-2011 included the upgrading of national infrastructure for Training and Archiving of IP documentation in addition to other technical training in the area of patents, to better promote the protection of inventions via a patent information dissemination service.

Malta also has a working agreement in place with the EPO whereby the Commerce Division is now in a position to request searches from the European Patent Office to determine the level of novelty in patent applications, which has paved the way for legislative amendments in the field of patenting to be discussed with the generic pharmaceutical industry.

Cooperation with EU DG Enterprise

Under the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme, the CD is actively participating in EU's trans-national project, known as IPEuropAware, involving 27 partners comprising the EU's main IP Offices *to raise awareness of and knowledge of IP rights in particular for SMEs*. The project, which commenced in November 2007 and ends in 2011, consists of some 15 Work Packages grouped under three Modules. This office is pro-actively participating in this project by providing input to seven of the Work Packages (WPs) found under Module 1: Local Level SMEs Services for IPR Awareness and Enforcement.

Cooperation with the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO)

A specific fact-finding preparatory mission from WIPO came to Malta in August 2009 meeting all the relevant stakeholders with a view of preparing a snapshot analysis of the IP situation in Malta. This was followed by meetings with Director General of WIPO and a number of WIPO experts leading to a cooperation programme to start in 2010.

TRAINING

Ongoing exposure was given to the members of the SOLVIT team through participation in workshops partly funded by the EU Commission and two members of the IMI team through training events also organised and partly funded by the EU Commission. Other officials participated in workshops and training sessions organised by the Office for the Harmonisation of the Internal Market, the World Intellectual Property Organisation and by the European Patent Office.

During the past year, Officials from the Division attended several courses organised by Staff Development Organisation. Moreover, ad hoc seminars on social and work related issues were organised by the Commerce Division. The topics chosen were: Bullying at the Workplace, Approaching the problem employee, Stress Management and Data Protection. Furthermore, on site visits to the Sant'Antnin Recycling Plant were organised.

GODWIN WARR

Director General (Commerce)

Office of the Notary to Government

The Office of the Notary to Government comprises two main sections: the Notarial Archives and the Notarial Section.

NOTARIAL ARCHIVES SECTION

Documents deposited in the Notarial Archives include deeds *inter vivos* and *causa mortis* published by Notaries Public who have practised or are practising in Malta. The latter are wills drawn up in the public form; the former are all other deeds relating to property transfers (sales, emphyteusis, partitions and others), loans, powers of attorney and so on. Moreover in the Archives one finds also all deeds received by the Notaries to Government. All these deeds are deposited for custody and safe-keeping. The original deeds are housed at the head office in number 2/3, Mikiel Anton Vassalli Street, Valletta, whilst the Registers (copies) are housed at 24, St. Christopher Street, Valletta.

All deeds are also accessible to the public for inspection, provided that the person enquiring about a particular deed can indicate the Notary who published same and the date thereof. Legal or informal photocopies thereof are issued on request. Requests are also made by means of e-mail and this system has helped to improve the services. Fees are charged for such inspections and for any copies requested.

Assistance was given to a great number of clients who had problems arising from deeds published by a Notary whose warrant was suspended by the Courts. In this respect, assistance was mostly given where possible relative notes of enrolment and hypothecation were entered into the Public Registry by the Chief Notary to Government and where necessary forms for payment of taxes to the CIR were signed by same.

By virtue of a Legal Notice published during the year under review, the Commissioner for Notarial Acts can now inspect volumes after June 2000 as was previously the case. This has doubled the influx of volumes into the Archives and thus enabling us to offer a better service to our clients.

NOTARIAL SECTION

The Notarial Section publishes deeds to which the Government, any corporate body established by law or any partnership or other body in which the Government of Malta or any such body has a controlling interest or over which they have effective control, is a party.

The Notarial Section liaises directly with various government departments to give effect to certain government policies and activities. The Department also receives requests for the publication of deeds relating to courses of study which the Health Division advertises from time to time for the training of medical and para-medical staff. These requests are also received when scholarships are granted by the Education Division, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Works Division and others.

A number of contracts were published by the Notaries at the Department, of note were contracts requested by the SDO for those employees following a Diploma course in Public Administration and a course leading to a Masters Degree in Administration, as well as other courses leading to a Masters Degree in various subjects.

UPGRADING OF ARCHIVES AT ST CHRISTOPHER STREET

During the period under review the Office, with the assistance of the Notarial Archives Resources Council, continued working on the project of organising and upgrading the Archives at St Christopher Street Valletta. A room in St Paul's Street was granted on lease from the Government Property Division and annexed to the Archives thus helping to alleviate the ever-increasing problem of lack of space. Another room on the top floor of the building had its beams reinforced and was whitewashed to prepare for the installation of new shelving.

These Archives had a number of distinguished visitors during the year including the Spanish Ambassador who was impressed with the contents of these Archives. In fact the Archives form part of the project regarding Archives between the Maltese and the Spanish Governments, the memorandum of which was signed in November 2009. A meeting was also held with Professor Theresa Vann from the Hill Monastic Manuscript Library of St John's University, Minnesota in the United States with the view of instituting a pilot project of digitisation of the oldest volumes in 2010.

These Archives are officially open to the public twice a week; however by agreement with the staff they are in actual fact receiving the public every day.

NOTARIAL WARRANT EXAMINATION

In March 2009, a Notarial warrant exam was held for 26 students. All the students were successful and obtained their warrant in June.

LIST OF NOTARIES

The Department also prepared the list of deceased Notaries and their keepers, both in Malta and Gozo, as well as the list of practising Notaries, in Malta and Gozo, for publication in the Government Gazette in January 2010.

LOTTERIES

The Notaries from this Department were appointed by the Lotteries and Gaming Authority to be present to supervise the weekly Super Five and Lotto draws held throughout the year. These are being held in a private studio in Birkirkara and transmitted live on television. A Notary from the Department also supervised the Government VAT receipts lottery held monthly at St James Ditch, Floriana.

STATISTICS

Notarial Archives

Volumes of deeds received in the Archives in terms of the Notarial Profession and Notarial Archives Act (Chap. 55)	345
Volumes of deeds received from the Special Commissioner for Notarial Acts in terms of Act X of 1999	321
Copies of deeds issued	8,625
Volumes repaired	71
Volumes bound	43

Notary to Government Office

Deeds were published in connection with:	
Works (Tenders) contracts	-
Courses of Study and Scholarships	32
Sale of grave sites	6
Other transactions to which Government was a party	16
Notes of Enrolment, Hypothecs, and References entered in the Public Registry	55

Revenue and Expenditure

The revenue collected by the Office, during the year under review, amounted to €63,670.58 and the expenditure during the same period totalled €263,156.48

DR CORA VELLA
Chief Notary to Government

Government Property Division

Directorate General

INTRODUCTION

The Government Property Division (GPD) is responsible for the management of Government's immovable estate. The mission of the GPD is to promote and maintain the highest and best use of Government's immovable estate and to ensure an equitable process for the acquisition of property that may be required for public purpose. The GPD incorporates the Land Department, the Estate Management Department and the Joint Office.

Whereas each of the three departments has precise objectives to achieve within a specific remit, the GPD acts as the coordinator of all operations whilst ensuring smooth management through the provision of the necessary financial and administrative support.

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

Rehabilitation Works

- *Auberge de Bavière*: The refurbishment work that had started during the previous years continued. Works on the intermediate floor, in the west wing of the Auberge, were completely finalised, including the staircase leading to the upper level. Electrical installation is operational except for the corridors and the main entrance. Paving of this wing is also finalised. Air conditioning works were completed. Restored timber doors and windows were refitted. The tender for the network infrastructure for the west wing of the Auberge was awarded and works started immediately and now are completed. The electricity substation civil engineering works were also finished.

Preparatory work for the rehabilitation of phase 3, ie, the central part of the part started in earnest and it is hoped that a turnkey tender will be awarded. It is planned that most of this work will be undertaken during 2010.

- *Joint Office*: Works on a passenger lift at the GPD Annexe that houses the Joint Office continued to render the three-storey building more accessible to both staff and clients. Works continued to ensure that all offices have air-conditioning.

Information Technology

The major work in the area was the awarding of the tender for the Land Estate Management Information System (LEMIS). This tender was won by Datatrak and intensive negotiation took place between the two sides in order to conclude and sign the contract. It is hoped that this contract will be finalised and signed during the first week of January 2010.

Enhancements to the Land Cheque Printing System were carried out and finalised early in 2009, thus enabling the provision of a detailed cheque statement to clients for the first time. Meetings and workshops regarding the EMA project, which consist of the consolidation of GPD with MITA and the decommissioning of servers from GPD data centre, were concluded. Coordination with MFEI and MITA for the procurement of new PCs for GPD staff continued and more than 100PCs were replaced. The project to extend the rent billing service, the payment of rent at local council service as well as the e-service to ex-Church properties is being continued. The accounts currently being migrated are those

whose tenants applied under the Agricultural Land Scheme 2000. Discussion with MITA to enhance the Map Scanning Tenements and Acquisitions applications are still on-going. Updates took place in the GPD website reflecting recent changes within the Division.

Human Resources

During 2009, GPD experienced substantial changes in its workforce. 21 staff members terminated their employment whilst 46 were newly deployed to the Division, thus increasing GPD staff complement by 25 staff members.

During the year, management introduced the possibility that all personnel of Division can chose either to work from 7.00am to 4.30pm or from 7.45am to 5.15pm with a 45 minute break. More than 60 staff members opted for the first timetable.

Opening hours to the public were also changed to allow staff to perform internal administrative work. The Division now remains closed to the public every Tuesday and Thursday afternoon. Notices were put on every entrance of the Division and adverts were published on daily papers announcing the new opening hours.

Training Programme

The GPD continued to organise in-house training programmes to upgrade the skills and abilities of staff. In collaboration with SDO, four morning sessions were organised on the work of the Registry and the handling of the DOCREG and around 75 GPD employees participated in this training. Moreover one training session was organised for Registry staff for upgrading of skills and strengthening of coordination of work.

A two-hour training session on eviction orders was given to six Enforcement Officers by the Director of the Lands Department and the Head of Section.

During September and October, Heads of Sections in the Estate Management Department gave a lecture to other staff members within the various units. Areas covered included Land Registration, Property Terrier, Agricultural Leases and Auto Cad.

Registry & Customer Care

The Registry section is the heart of the Government Property Division, ensuring that all correspondence reaching the Office is inserted into the relative files. During 2009 the Registry Section received a total of 10,570 letters that were acknowledged and either inserted into existing files or inserted into new files. The Registry Section also distributes many more letters that do not need to be acknowledged. During the year, 395 new files were opened, along with a substantial amount of part files, bringing the total amount of Government Property Division files to 131,643. Registry also ensures that all members of staff are provided with the files relating to the property, request, complaint or administrative task that they are responsible for dealing with. File movements during 2009 amounted to 210,231, an average of 809 files moving to different sections per day.

The Customer Care section was recently amalgamated with the Registry Section in order to ensure that the process of distributing queries to the responsible officials is more efficient, and new procedures are being put into operation to ensure that the general public receive the attention and information that they need.

This section is open to the general public on Monday to Friday from 8.30am to 12.00 noon, and on Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 2.00pm to 4.00pm. The Customer Care Section replies both to queries received by post and e-mail and also attends to an average of 25 persons per day who personally visit their offices to pose the relative queries on departmental procedures, regulations and other personal

queries. This Section receives an average of five e-mails per day, which are either replied to immediately, or as soon as more research is carried out. Incoming telephone calls are incessant particularly in the morning and calculated at approximately 60 calls per day. The general public now has also the opportunity to contact the GPD's Freephone on 1,577 which is also being filtered through the Customer Care Section.

Many of the requests for assistance entail follow-up action and research in the relevant files. Due to lack of human resources, a support time-table has been formulated for the Section to be manned by personnel from the different sections of the Division, when Customer Care staff are either on vacation leave or sick leave.

Gozo Branch

GPD continues to provide personalised service to clients through its branch in Gozo where rents, ground rents, and *qbiela* may be paid. The Gozo office also provides limited customer care services. Due to shortage of staff, GPD was unable to replace one of the two employees assigned to this branch and hence, this office has to be kept closed for a few of days.

Financial Matters

Funds allocated to the GPD under the Budget Estimates are managed with care and due diligence. All reporting is done on a regular basis including accrual accounting reports. Besides the day-to-day running expenses, the Accounts Section settled all bills related to court registry fees, research, land registration, contracts, electricity and water supply, burthens, refunds of overpaid ground rent and enforcement works.

Health and Safety

Health and safety issues are an ongoing process and annual updating of the risk assessment is being carried out in order to continue building on past initiatives. GPD staff members are regularly notified of any course that is available. All staff members are encouraged to attend.

Green Initiatives

The GPD continues to support and promote green initiatives. Waste is being separated and disposed of according to guidelines in collaboration with WasteServ. Environment stickers to save water and electricity can be seen in prominent places and auto-spouts purchased. Energy saving appliances are used whenever possible.

ALFRED BEZZINA
Director General (Designate)

Government Property Division Land Department

INTRODUCTION

The Land Department's role within the Government Property Division is that of being responsible for the legal aspect of Government Property Management. This means that after the Estate Management Department or Joint Office has decided on the best possible use for a particular property, the issue is taken over by the Land Department for the actual disposal of the property under the procedures permitted in the Disposal of Government Land Act.

In general terms, the formal disposal of government property requires either the issue of a call for tenders or else an ad hoc Parliamentary Resolution. It is the Land Department's task to prepare tender documents, publish them and award the disposal. Likewise ad hoc Parliamentary Resolutions are prepared by the Department. Subsequent to the disposal of a property through lease agreements/contracts, the Land Department is then responsible for the follow-up and enforcement of any conditions imposed on the transferee. These include the payment of rent and the proper maintenance of the property but may also contain other special conditions such as the development of structural improvements within specified time limits. The finalisation of contracts also includes those related to the acquisition of private property for a public purpose under the auspices of the Land Acquisition (Public Purpose) Ordinance. Indeed the expropriation of private property is a primary task of the Land Department, one which enables government to carry out major infrastructure works and other projects of benefit to Maltese society.

The Land Department is organisationally split up into two branches, namely the Enforcement Branch and the Contracts Branch; between them these cater for the wide ranging roles entrusted to the department. As the names suggest, the former is responsible for all enforcement measures required to better manage government property, whilst the latter takes care of the formal requirements of leasing or selling/purchasing property and finalising related contracts.

ENFORCEMENT BRANCH

The enforcement of contractual conditions is essential if property management is to be given any significance. Within this aspect, the very small number of Enforcement Officers carries out site checks to ensure that conditions of leases and permits are being honoured. Non-compliance is met by counter measures to ensure that defaulters are brought back on track. These measures include formal warnings, the issue of prohibitory injunctions and also eviction proceedings. In this regard Chapter 228 of the Laws of Malta - Land (Compulsory Eviction) Act – gives the Commissioner of Land extensive powers to evict persons who occupy government property without title. This power is used with caution but the Land Department is committed to ensure that government property is not abused of.

The enforcement section incorporates within it the collection of rent due on leased property. The non-payment of rent is monitored through periodical invoices and also through individual demand letters. Persistent non-payment leads to judicial action that may include executive warrants, the termination of leases and, in the more serious cases, eventual eviction. The Revenue Section of the Joint Office is to be amalgamated with the Revenue Section at the Land Department.

During 2009, over 24,000 payments (51% of total payments of rent) were effected at local councils, while 1,000 payments (2.22% of total payments) were made through the Government Property Division's website (www.gpd.gov.mt). Clients have three options for the payment of rent: at the Department by cheque or bank draft, at the local councils by cash, cheque or bank draft and from their homes by credit card through the GPD's website. It is planned to introduce the 24X7 internet banking and epos services in 2010.

CONTRACTS BRANCH

The role of this branch is the formalisation of any disposal or acquisition of property. As already indicated, the Disposal of Government Land Act stipulates that government property can generally be disposed of either through tenders or through a special Resolution of the House of Representatives.

The publication of tenders necessitates continual liaison with the Estate Management Department and the Joint Office to ensure that the appropriate conditions are set out in the tender. Transparency is ensured by opening all tender documents in public.

Government has for decades made use of the provisions of the Land Acquisition (Public Purpose) Ordinance (LAO) to enable it to take over private property without having finalised acquisition proceedings. Since 1994, the department has limited the growth of the acquisition debt by requiring government departments that originate the need for the acquisition, to provide up front the full estimated value of the effected property. This ensures the payment on demand for any acquired property. Between 2002 and 2009 over €74 million have been paid for expropriated property.

In accordance with the provisions of amendments brought into force in 2003, the Department can take action to process past outstanding acquisitions and purchase property under certain conditions set out by law. These are intended to minimise the expropriation debt as well as to enable Government to draw up the long outstanding HOS plots contracts and dispose of residences within housing estates constructed on land still under acquisition. Under these amendments a total of 94 bank accounts were opened in 2009 for a total deposit amounting to €2 million.

In terms of Act XXI of 2009, which came into force on 1 December 2009, the Land Acquisition (Public Purpose) Ordinance was amended further to establish a method of valuation for the expropriation of historical property, allow the owner/s to contest the public purpose, qualify further the role of the architects and appointment of architects sitting on the Land Arbitration Board as experts, make court appointed architects' reports accessible and to the parties who may wish to make questions to members of the Land Arbitration Board and allow persons to appeal on both points of law and facts before the Court of Appeal.

2009 HIGHLIGHTS

Revenue Collection

During the year, 69,500 rent invoices, 149 judicial letters, and over 98 lease termination warnings were issued to ensure timely recovery of rent dues. This also entailed telephone contacts and customer care assistance. About 120 repayment agreements (90 residential and 30 non-residential) were also negotiated with defaulters. This has resulted in a total revenue in 2009 of €25,983,854 excluding sales.

Abuse of Government Property/Evictions

The new administration felt the need to address this matter seriously and as result serious enforcement measures were initiated in 2008 and continued during 2009. Notwithstanding that the Enforcement Branch numbers five persons in all, the Department can boast that through the determination of the new administration with the efficiency of these persons, enforcement was incessantly carried out in 2009 and the Department is successfully managing to free public pavements and government land from illegal

encroachments. As a result, the Land Department has won the support of the public in its commitment to stop the abuse of government land. A total of 142 evictions and approximately 200 inspections on illegalities were carried out during 2009.

Tenders, Leases and Sales

During the year, the Land Department advertised a total of 198 tenders for the lease of government property. These resulted in 99 lease agreements and 57 contracts. A total of 433 lease agreements were concluded in terms of the Agricultural Scheme. 162 encroachment permits were issued - these included permits for mobile kiosks and permits for the placing of tables in public areas. The Department also completed the sale of government land/property, including ex Church Property resulting in revenue for 2009 of €7,146,690.

Acquisition

In 2009, the Department finalised a number of acquisition deeds paying a total of €10.5 million to owners of expropriated property. A total of 60 new President's Declarations for the expropriation of land mainly for Road formation was issued. In addition, 34 President's Declarations of past outstanding acquisitions, in order to compensate the owners in accordance with the amendments made to the Land Acquisition (Public Purpose) Ordinance (Chapter 88), were also issued.

Releases

In 2009, a total of 30,011 square meters of land in various localities formerly acquired in virtue of the Land Acquisition (Public Purpose) Ordinance (Chapter 88), was released back to the private owners.

Other Services

During 2009, the Land Department continued to provide, free of charge, agency services to the Housing Authority. Within these services, the total sum collected on behalf of the Housing Authority was €230,521. The sum of €10,831 was collected as rent for sports facilities on behalf of the Sports Council.

Projects

The Land Department worked closely with Enemalta Corporation and the Privatisation Unit in the conclusion of expropriations and other work related to the privatisation of the Petroleum Division, which is envisaged to take place in 2010. The Land Department, in conjunction with MIMCOL, also prepared a comprehensive report on the major projects for the Public Accounts Committee. A comprehensive exercise was carried out to identify alternative property for the evictees affected by the Renzo Piano City Gate Project and other spadework was done in connection with this project. The Department also processed the devolution of various sites and premises to NGOs and local councils.

ALBERT V MAMO
Director (Land)

Government Property Division

Estates Management Department

DEPARTMENTAL OVERVIEW

The Estate Management Department's (EMD) mission within the Government Property Division is to shape and deliver Government's immovable property agenda by providing quality property-related advice and services. EMD ensures that Government achieve its policy objectives by contributing to three key outcomes:

- Improved and more efficient property operations;
- Sustaining Government finances;
- Sustaining Government projects and initiatives.

PROPERTY OPERATIONS

Property Records

The update and maintenance of government property records is a fundamental task carried out by the EMD. This comprises of several property datasets including a textual database of government-owned property (excluding ex-church property records which are maintained by the Joint Office), deed packets as well as a number of map-sets. These records are an important information source for such government projects as Enemalta SPV project, the Grand Harbour project, City Gate project, housing, roads etc.

Properties occupied by Government Departments/Entities

In order to consolidate the property terrier, properties occupied by government departments/entities are being investigated and verified; this exercise is being carried out to confirm occupation, type of use, extent and actual occupier. During 2009, EMD undertook the task of verification and consolidation of properties occupied by Enemalta, Heritage Malta, Water Service Corporation and Education Division.

Property Information Requests

As part of its role in maintaining the property terrier, the EMD provides property related information to a varied list of clients that ranges from private individuals and companies to government ministries, departments, agencies and authorities. Information is typically required in connection with the possible disposal of such property and in relation to government projects and initiatives. During 2009, the EMD handled over 4,500 such requests/reports. In addition, the EMD carried out 721 property inspections, apart from giving assistance to the Land Department in 57 court cases. 356 property status reports were also drawn up.

Property Plans

The preparation of property plans and drawings is an essential element in the management of government immovable property and the maintenance of a property terrier. The EMD utilises a custom-developed GIS-based Property Drawing System for the preparation of all property drawings. This system also interfaces with specific off-the-shelf computer aided design software to facilitate layout drawings. During 2009, the EMD put up a total of 1,018 property drawings in connection with leases, sales and permits over

government-owned property. In addition, 10,811 copies of plans were provided by the GPD in relation to such matters as Parliamentary Resolutions, land registrations, tenders etc.

Protection of Government Title to Property

Under the provisions of the Land Registration Act, the first registration claimant to a property obtains a pre-emptive advantage over other pretenders. To safeguard Government's rights, the EMD checks every single application for property registration made with the Land Registry. During 2009, about 400 such applications were checked and, where applicable, the necessary cautions raised. The Department also investigated and resolved 147 cases of cautions & corrections raised against it by private parties. To further secure Government's title to its real estate, the EMD also undertakes the laborious process of registering Government's title via ad hoc applications to the Land Registry. During 2009 some 3,060 land registration plans were prepared of which the EMD registered a total land area of 2,446.534 square metres.

Operational Streamlining

The EMD's efforts to ensure an effective public service delivery are ongoing. During 2009 the Department streamlined a number of operational processes, including the transfer of government-owned residential property to the Housing Authority and the issue of permits for temporary activities. It is calculated that efficiency in these cases has improved by a minimum of 100%.

SUSTAINING GOVERNMENT FINANCES

Tender Proposals

Tender proposals are prepared for the eventual issue of tenders for the disposal of government property. During this process, EMD analyse and submit proposals for the issue of tenders, taking into account factors such as demand, location, type of use, property ownership, etc. During 2009, EMD prepared and referred to the Land Department 151 tender proposals.

Sale of Property

As part of its business development process, the EMD continually strives for the identification of property that may be issued for sale at competitive prices. During 2009, 68 properties were referred to the Land Department for sale through tenders or redemption. During 2009 sale of government property was effected for a total in excess of €10,457,500.00.

Property Leasing

EMD also sustains government finances by processing and approving the disposal of government-owned land and buildings via emphyteutical grants, leases and temporary permits – with the final legal document being issued by the Land Department. This involves such properties as land, shops, garages, stores, mobile kiosks, filming, table and chair permits etc. During 2009 the EMD processed 65 cases for temporary activities on government land, 265 permits for repairs/works and 113 tables and chairs permits. In addition the EMD also approved another 83 properties for leasing and emphyteutical grants. During 2009 new leases were effected for a total yearly rent in excess of € 215,446.43.

SUSTAINING GOVERNMENT PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

Devolution of Property to Local Councils

The EMD's task is to assess the devolution proposal, draw up necessary plans and ad hoc conditions and then refer the matter to the Land Department for finalisation of contract of transfer. During 2009 the

Government Property Division concluded the devolution/leasing agreements for 13 properties as approved by EMD. These consist of properties in Għarb, Munxar, St Julians, Qala, Victoria, Kirkop, Żurrieq, Sannat, Xaghra, Xgħajra, and three sites in Mellieħa.

Property Expropriation Assistance for Infrastructural Projects

The EMD also handles requests made by government departments for the expropriation of private property for public purposes, mainly in connection with infrastructural projects. The EMD collects all relevant technical data, takes corrective measures as appropriate, liaisons with the sponsoring department and prepares the necessary plans for the expropriation. The EMD also provides technical assistance to the Land Department in acquisition cases taken in front of the Land Arbitration Board. During 2009 EMD's efforts enabled the Land Department to issue 56 new cases of expropriation.

In 2009, the EMD approved the release back to the original owners of 29,697 square metres of land that had been expropriated but was never made use of by Government.

Special Projects

During 2009, the EMD continued to play an active role in special projects sponsored by Central Government including the Enemalta SPV project, Malta Dry Docks, City Gate project, and the Grand Harbour project. EMD's involvement relates to the identification of land boundaries, status and burdens, participation in the preparation of disposal conditions, preparation of plans and in some cases provision of final documentation.

Land Transfer to Government Entities

Other major projects that involved the EMD during 2009 were those related to the transfer of government-owned properties to government entities. These included the transfer of several parcels of land to Enemalta for substation purposes.

Facilitation of Home Ownership Schemes

As in previous years the EMD continued to sustain Government's efforts to promote home ownership by authorising the transfer to the Housing Authority of 212 properties for eventual sale to tenants.

Agricultural Land Scheme

This scheme was a corporate initiative that enabled cultivators of government-owned agricultural land to register for the possibility of acquiring a new title to the land even where occupation was irregular. During 2009 the EMD processed and approved for leasing 495 applications.

Possession and Use

The EMD has embarked on the process of capitalising properties held by Government under a Possession and Use/Public Tenure title. The process involves the manual sifting of all graphical map sets, and retrieval of relevant information from the hard copies held within the EMD, which documentation is then referred to the technical section for the drawing up of the required Property Drawing. When the data is organised and the plans are finalised all documentation is referred to the Land Department for the continuation of the process. During the year, 906 properties were referred to the Land Department for further investigation and issue of relative legal notice. In addition, 1,360 properties are pending the finalisation of their respective Property Drawing and or detail verification. The Localities under process are Valletta, Senglea, Birkirkara, Vittoriosa, Floriana and Cospicua.

Support Services

The EMD also provides support services by providing property related information to such government bodies as the Planning Authority, Works Division, Department of Social Housing, Land Registry, MIMCOL, MIP, Malta Transport Authority, Malta Maritime Authority and Housing Authority.

ALFRED MIFSUD

A/Director (Estate Management)

Government Property Division Joint Office

INTRODUCTION

The roles of the Joint Office are:

- managing and administering the immovable estate transferred to Government by the ecclesiastical authorities in terms of the Ecclesiastical Entities (Properties) Act, Cap. 358;
- validating and verifying the data being transferred to it by the ecclesiastical entities. The scope is to determine the exact value of all the properties transferred so that the necessary adjustments are made to the original amount of Lm28,067,000 which the Government issued in Bonds in terms of the 1991 Agreement with the ecclesiastical authorities
- to register at the Land Registry all the properties which it administers, as well as those retained by the ecclesiastical entities.

PROPERTY ADMINISTRATION AND ALIENATIONS

In 2009, the following properties were alienated:

As per 2002 Initiative or original deed	250
As per Tenders/Exchange/Direct Disposal/Conversion	6
Total	256

The Department also received and processed requests for the recognition of emphyteutae and tenants in their respective properties.

2002 INITIATIVE

This Scheme was a result of Government's announcement in the 2002 Budget Speech, that the Government was putting on the market all the properties being administered by the Joint Office and which are either resident-occupied or used as a summer residence. By 29 January 2009, when it was decided that the scheme be suspended and no new applications be accepted so that the Department would have time to process and conclude the existing applications within the short term and thereafter issue another Scheme (not necessarily with the same conditions), the Joint Office had received 5,478 applications for the redemption of ground rent and for the purchase of leased premises.

Of the 4,671 applications processed so far, 821 applications were invalid and a further 3,516 applicants were informed of the amount of redemption or of the selling price, as determined by established criteria. With a view to hastening the process, the Joint Office farms out to architects in private practice, the valuation of certain properties and to notaries in private practice the publication of deeds of redemption or sale.

AGRICULTURE LEASES SCHEME

The Joint Office is also processing applications received by February 2001 in terms of a scheme whereby persons occupying government-owned land for agricultural purposes without title were given the opportunity to regularise their position.

RECONCILIATION, VERIFICATION AND REGISTRATION

Transfer of Information on Properties

During 2009, the transfer of information from the Church Administrative Offices to the Joint Office regarding properties transferred to the Government by the Church continued at a steady pace. Up to the end of the year, 24,726 forms concerning properties, listed in Annex 8 of the Church/State Agreement, were forwarded to the Joint Office by the ecclesiastical entities.

It is to be noted, however, that a large number of correction forms had to be raised or confirmed regarding this information, which corrections have to be approved by the Control Committee in terms of Section 4 (2) of the Agreement. These corrections entail additions of properties inadvertently left out of the Annexes to the Agreement, deletion of others that were erroneously included, and correction to the capitalised amounts of properties.

In 2009, the Control Committee approved 359 of the above mentioned corrections. The Committee also signed 261 property forms, thus confirming the final amount due to the ecclesiastical entities in respect of the properties concerned.

During the year, the Joint Office continued to reconcile the values of properties previously owned by the 99 different ecclesiastical entities. Thus by the end of the year the Joint Office has reconciled a total of 53 entities.

Registration of Properties

The Department continued with the registration of property with the Land Registry in terms of Cap 358. During 2009, the Joint Office registered 542 properties which include 696,466 square metres of land which is not built up. The related work entailed the drawing up of relative plans. This brought the total number of properties registered as of 31 December 2009 to 12,268.

The following table shows the number of properties which were registered during the past three years:

	2007	2008	2009
Properties registered	567	607	542

Revenue Collection

Besides the collection of rent of leased properties, the Department identified properties available for disposal in terms of the Disposal of Government Land Act. The following table shows the comparative figure of revenue collected during the past three years:

	2007	2008	2009
	€	€	€
Rent	1,416,501	888,428	1,066,711
Sales	4,959,101	13,266,255	2,310,012
Total	6,375,602	14,154,683	3,376,723

40% of the amount of rent collected during 2009 consisted of arrears. This was the result of an ongoing enforcement exercise undertaken by the Department in conjunction with the Land Department.

The Control Committee

The Control Committee is a body set up in terms of Article 17 of the 1991 Agreement between the Holy See and the Government of Malta. Two members of the Committee are nominated by the Holy See and two members are nominated by the Government of Malta. Chairmanship of meetings is by rotation. The

present members representing the Government of Malta were nominated in January 2002. During 2009, this Committee met ten times.

The functions of the Control Committee are promoting and monitoring the correct and timely application of the provisions of the above-mentioned Agreement with particular reference to the approval of corrections to the Annexes; and the alienation of property and in particular to bonds that have to be issued to the Foundation for Church Schools.

By Legal Notice No. 166/2009 the sum of €13,670,000 in Government Stock was issued to the Foundation for Church Schools in respect of property alienated in the previous year.

COORDINATION WITH THE ESTATE MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT AND LAND DEPARTMENT

The coordination and related cooperation of the Joint Office with the Estate Management Department and the Land Department continued to be essential for uniformity in adapting common policies of the Division.

CONCLUSION

The Government Property Division's role in ensuring that the use of government property is appropriately controlled is considered to be of utmost importance. This will help in inducing a rationalisation culture that appreciates the true potential value of government property and its possible uses.

VINCENT GILSON
Director (Joint Office)



**Ministry for Justice
and Home Affairs**

Attorney General's Agency

Since its establishment as a Government agency in May 2005, the Office of the Attorney General continued to be provided with the necessary yearly funding on the part of Government, in order to be in a position to carry out its functions and obligations as provided for in the Government/Agency Agreement of 31 May 2005.

In the course of 2009, the Attorney General's Agency continued to provide the Government with a wide spectrum of legal services including representations on various committees, both domestically and abroad as well as appearing for Government in judicial proceedings both before domestic courts and before international fora such as the European Court of Human Rights and the European Court of Justice, the latter being an institution which is making increasing demands on the legal resources of the Agency.

The legal staff complement at the Office of the Attorney General as at the end of 2009 was as follows: the Attorney General, the Deputy Attorney General, one Head of Unit (Prosecutions), one Head of Unit (International Co-Operation in Criminal Matters Division), four Senior Lawyers, five Lawyers, nine Junior Lawyers, one Senior Legal Procurator and three Legal Procurators.

Notwithstanding the marked improvement in the staffing situation, the Agency continues to suffer from the handicap that it is not yet in the desirable position to attract seasoned lawyers backed with years of experience in the legal practice. This is mainly due to the fact that the financial package being offered today to lawyers interested to join the Agency is still not sufficiently competitive with what lawyers can earn in the private sector. .

At the end of 2009, the administrative and clerical staff complement of the Agency was made up of a consultant to the Attorney General on administrative matters and a number of officers in the various clerical grades, who perform duties either as clerical support staff to the two legal departments, or in the administrative sectors of the Agency.

ACCOUNTS

The total revenue accruing to the Office of the Attorney General during 2009 was registered as follows:

Affidavits	€184.48
Legal Fees	€87,940.32
Miscellaneous	€9,930.16
Process Verbaux	€7,490.97
Total	€105,545.93

The amount as given is the actual revenue accruing in the books of the Office of the Attorney General for the said year but, of course, account should be taken of the substantial amount of monies which the Office enables the Government to collect through legal action taken by the Office as a result of judicial actions and other judicial intimations.

NEW PREMISES PROJECT

The realisation of the new premises project, at Archbishop Street corner with Strait Street Valletta, now confirmed, remains an imperative objective for the Agency to be in the ideal position to honour its commitments as outlined in the Government/Agency Agreement.

After long years of insignificant progress, due to innumerable obstacles which arose along the way, in the course of 2009, the Agency reached agreement with Government, in order for this project be taken in hand by the architects appointed by the Ministry for Resources and Rural Affairs. To this effect, two architects from the Works Division were assigned the responsibilities of this project.

Following discussions between the Attorney General and the architects in charge of the project, fresh plans were submitted to MEPA. As a result of several meetings with MEPA officials, some minor amendments were indicated to the original plans and, at this point in time, action is in progress to conclude the required amendments.

A departmental tender was issued for the demolition of existing dangerous roofs (which are in a semi-collapsed state) to eliminate the danger. The three offers varied wildly from the cheapest (€180,000) to the most expensive (€400,000). However, it was subsequently decided to incorporate these works in the main tender to be issued.

The process of preparing the tender documents for the conversion of the dilapidated buildings into offices as per plans submitted to MEPA was, therefore, initiated and the target was to have the documents completed by the end of December 2009.

It was originally planned to have the main tender (provisional estimate €5,000,000) in early 2010 so that the relevant works could be taken in hand in April/May 2010. However, delays in the processing and issue of the MEPA permit have pushed back the original target.

In the absence of registering significant and tangible progress in the early weeks of 2010, the Agency's aims in relation to its move to the new premises will be seriously jeopardised.

ENHANCED LIBRARY

The indispensable library facilities essential to support legal officers at the Office in their function of advising and representing Government continued to be enriched with up-to-date material on various legal topics and in particular on Community Law which was an area of law which not catered for at all at the Office. The process to equip the Agency with the indispensable legal literature to ensure that it remains in the best position to advise and guide Government was accelerated in recent years and the period of this report has continued to see the Agency's library enriched by new important, although expensive, acquisitions.

CIVIL CASES DEPARTMENT

As in previous years, the Civil Cases and Administrative Law Department and the Criminal Cases Department continued with their respective activities and as a result of the increase in legal staff the departments could cope better with the ever increasing demands for legal services from the Office.

The Civil Cases and Administrative Law Department tenders legal advice on a very wide spectrum of subjects to government departments on an ongoing basis.

Lawyers within this Department plead on behalf of Government in Small Claims, Inferior, Superior and Appeal Courts and before the Constitutional Court, in court cases of a civil, administrative or constitutional nature.

Lawyers, Legal Procurators and Clerks in this Department also pursue the drafting, filing and follow-up of numerous judicial acts and legal letters required to collect monies due to Government and to enforce legal claims.

Relevant data regarding the activities of the Civil Cases and Administrative Law Department for 2009 is given in Appendix A.

PROSECUTIONS UNIT

The Attorney General is also the Public Prosecutor before the Criminal Court and the Court of Criminal Appeal. Certain prosecutions initiated by the Police require the previous consent or direction of the Attorney General.

The Criminal Cases Department is responsible for the processing of criminal inquiries (*kumpilazzjonijiet*) and the filing of bills of indictment where this is warranted. Trials by jury are prosecuted by legal officers within the department. The office is also the depository of all *procès verbaux* drawn up by magistrates in Malta and Gozo following a judicial inquiry.

The *procès verbaux* are vetted by the legal staff for any further investigation that may be necessary. The Department also deals with consents to the Police for summary proceedings, orders by the Attorney General with respect to drug cases, appeals from judgments of the Criminal Court and of the Courts of Magistrates as a Court of Criminal judicature, applications for bail and on various issues connected with criminal proceedings and requests for visiting permits to prisoners awaiting trial.

Relevant data regarding the activities of the Criminal Cases Department for 2009 is given in Appendix B.

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN CRIMINAL MATTERS UNIT

Another area where the Agency is very active is that of international judicial cooperation in criminal matters including extradition, mutual assistance and transfer of sentenced persons. A small unit to deal with such issues was created and has now been in place since the setting up of the Agency. Requests for assistance are usually made by way of letters rogatory which are examined and dealt with in the manner demanded by the nature of the request.

The officers within this Unit have also the task to assist the Police in any matter relating to the enforcement of laws against laundering and the sourcing of funds deriving from criminal activities. They also give regular assistance to dedicated agencies combating financial criminal activities, such as the Financial Investigations and Analysis Unit, and the Internal Audit and Investigations Directorate. The viewing and vetting of *procès verbaux* also fall under the Division's responsibility which has during 2009 viewed more than a thousand *procès verbaux*. Such processing requires an assurance that magisterial inquiries satisfy procedural legal requirements and that any compiled evidence is exhaustive.

Besides appearing in Court, the officers also follow topics within EU and Council of Europe institutions and are appointed as representatives to Eurojust and to the European Judicial Network. These tasks require them to participate regularly in meetings and conferences of interest to Malta.

Statistical data of the activities of this Unit for 2009 are shown in Appendix B.

EU UNIT

Following Malta's accession to the EU in May 2004, the Agency had set up an EU Unit and lawyers with specific expertise in EU matters have since been assigned duties within this Unit.

The functions of the EU Unit within the Attorney General's Agency are principally as follows:

- conducting litigation on behalf of Malta before the European Court of Justice (ECJ) and the Court of First Instance and advising ministries and departments on matters related to such litigation;
- providing advice and guidance to ministries, departments and the Permanent Representation of Malta to the EU on EU legal questions;
- representing Malta in a number of Council working groups;
- acting as national contact point for the EU Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA).

In the course of 2009, the EU Affairs Unit drafted and submitted a number of statements of defence and rejoinders in connection with a number of infringement actions against Malta, which the European Commission decided to refer to the ECJ. As at end 2009, there are three infringement actions against Malta pending before the ECJ. It has also submitted a number of written observations to the ECJ in relation to other cases, such as preliminary references originating from national courts of other Member States.

Amongst other things, the EU Unit is also providing advice and assistance on a variety of EU legal issues, including EU issues raised in the context of Maltese cases which have been or are currently being litigated before the Maltese Courts. It is also significant to note that in the course of 2009 there was the first preliminary reference from a Maltese Court to the European Court of Justice since Malta's accession to the EU. This Unit drafted and submitted the observations of the Government of Malta to the ECJ also as regards this preliminary reference.

The EU Unit also represented Malta in a number of EU Council Working Groups and other meetings organised by the EU institutions. The EU Unit also provided advice and assisted in the drafting of replies to letters of formal notice or reasoned opinions. Furthermore, this Unit provided advice to the relevant ministries in the course of negotiations at council meetings on certain proposals, including the regulation on IUU Fishing, the seal pups regulation, the proposed Directive on industrial emissions (IPPC), the proposed new Anti-Discrimination Directive and others.

LOCAL AND OVERSEES LEGAL REPRESENTATION

During the year under review, the Attorney General, as Agent of the Government, continued to represent Government and to plead before the European Court of Justice as necessary.

Lawyers from the Agency also represent Government in meetings of the Council of Europe Committees and of various other bodies of international organisations. They are also involved in the pleading of cases in the European Court of Human Rights and, since EU membership, in the European Court of Justice. They also periodically present and defend Government's position before other international bodies that monitor human rights situations or issues of corruption and money laundering.

A number of lawyers perform also lecturing duties at the University of Malta and at other institutions. It is considered that this activity plays an important role in enabling lawyers to keep up to date with developments in the academic field and in applying the legal resources of the Office for the benefit of legal education in general.

Lawyers from the Office of the Attorney General also advise Government on proposed legislation, draft Bills in question, and attend sittings of the House of Representatives during the passage of such Bills in order to advise the Ministers concerned and to draft any amendments which might be deemed necessary. In view of the bilingual edition of all legal enactments, the Office of the Attorney General is also engaged in the translation of laws.

MAIN AND SUBSIDIARY LEGISLATION

The Office also vets such subsidiary legislation as is referred to it to be cleared from the legal aspect, translated and published under the supervision of this Office.

During the year, 23 Acts were passed through Parliament and 383 Legal Notices were published in the Government Gazette.

Moreover, 24 Bills were also drafted or vetted and similarly published in the Gazette. Local Councils Bye-Laws, besides several other Bills and Legal Notices, were drafted or vetted without yet being published due to consultations being still in progress.

CONCLUSION

The Office of the Attorney General has now gained more ground in establishing itself as a Government Agency and, within the framework of the Agreement signed between the Government and the Attorney General in May 2005, the Agency continues to meet the multiple demands made on it

The capacity of the Agency to grow and develop in order to evolve and face the new and onerous challenges that arise from time to time, however, continues to be hampered by the lack of adequate premises which would enable the recruitment of more legal and administrative personnel and the expansion of facilities in support of staff and the tasks of the office. The past year has seen renewed efforts to resuscitate the ‘new premises project’ and the changes in approach have succeeded in resulting in progress in this area. Hopefully, the renewed impetus will allow the Agency to move to new premises within the target time-frame of 2012.

DR SILVIO CAMILLERI
Attorney General

APPENDIX A

CIVIL & CONSTITUTIONAL ACTS DEALT BY THE OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
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SUPERIOR COURTS

	<i>2007</i>	<i>2008</i>	<i>2009</i>
Judicial Letters	58	83	116
Writs of Summons/Rikorsi Guramentati	75	63	115
Appeals	71	79	93
Warrants of Seizure	0	0	11
Garnishee Orders	9	22	12

Miscellaneous Judicial Acts (including Applications, Statement of Defence, Notes of Submissions)			
First Hall	1,112	1,328	1,217
Second Hall/Family	101	118	122
Statements of Defence	62	200	190

INFERIOR COURTS

	<i>2007</i>	<i>2008</i>	<i>2009</i>
Judicial Letters	188	158	972*
Writs of Summons/Application	8	7	34
Warrants of Seizure	4	2	12
Garnishee Orders	22	21	60

Miscellaneous Judicial Acts (including Applications, Statement of Defence, Notes of Submissions)	393	451	1,217
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GOZO COURTS

	<i>2007</i>	<i>2008</i>	<i>2009</i>
Judicial Letters	52	25	46
Writ of Summons/Statement of Defence	3	9	2
Warrants	0	0	2
Miscellaneous Judicial Acts	72	38	67

CIVIL CASES

	<i>2007</i>	<i>2008</i>	<i>2009</i>
Decided	217	328	375
Current Cases	914	942	734
New Cases	205	316	374
Sine Die	35	32	36
Waiting for hearing	38	32	24

NEW CASES

	<i>2007</i>	<i>2008</i>	<i>2009</i>
Constitutional	66	55	65
Appeals	50	46	93
Civil	81	209	195
Inferior	8	6	21

* Note: 847 Judicial Letters were filed for the Inland Revenue Department.

APPENDIX B

Criminal Proceedings for the Years 2008, 2009		
	<i>2008</i>	<i>2009</i>
Bills of Indictment	23	55
Trials by Jury <i>Total</i>	23	55
Deċiżi	15	12
Ammissjoni	4	8
C. Order	1	13
Differ	3	
<i>Sine die</i>	Nil	Nil
Gurin	1	Nil
Cases remitted to Magistrates Courts for Judgement including Counter Orders	209	240
Consent for Summary Proceedings in terms of Section 370(4) of Criminal Code	828	775
New Preliminary Investigations referred to the Attorney General by the enquiring Magistrate	346	382
New cases remitted to the Attorney General as per Article 392a1 after a "Guilty Plea" is registered	194	215
Drug Cases examined under Caps. 31 and 101 for Attorney General's Order to proceed	753	737
Miscellaneous Applications	1,426	1,445
Appeal Applications from Court of Magistrates including appeals under Articles 392 A(1)	78	87
<i>Procès Verbaux</i> (Malta)	1,219	1,107
<i>Procès Verbaux</i> (Gozo)	37	32
Total	1,256	1,111

International Co-operation in Criminal Matters Unit Statistics – 2009		
	<i>2008</i>	<i>2009</i>
<i>Authority to board/inspect vessels</i>		
Malta as Requesting State	0	0
Malta as Requested State	0	0
<i>Extradition</i>		
Malta as Requesting State	3	0
Malta as Requested State	1	4
<i>European Arrest Warrants</i>		
Malta as Requesting State	1	7
Malta as Requested State	14	7
<i>Transfer of Sentenced Persons</i>		
Malta as Requesting State	0	3
Malta as Requested State	1	5
<i>Transfer of Proceedings</i>		
Malta as Requesting State	1	0
Malta as Requested State	1	4
<i>Requests for Mutual Legal Assistance*</i>		
Malta as Requesting State	9	18
Malta as Requested State	31	56
<i>Money Laundering (Domestic)</i>		
Issue of Investigation & Attachment Orders	2	3
<i>Proces Verbaux</i>	1,256	1,111

* (Includes letters rogatory/requests for interviews, search and seizure orders, information of judicial, service of summons and/or documents, requests for the issue of investigation/attachment and freezing orders)

Police Department

ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT

In-service Training Programme

The training programme for all police officers continued uninterrupted. More than 1,600 officers followed, for eight hours per month, a blend of core (physical training oriented) and non-core (academic) subjects at the Police Academy. A number of subjects, such as those dealing with mentally-disturbed patients as well as practical involvement in a number of practical scenarios, including simulation training, were also introduced.

Training to Palestinian Police Officers

Three Palestinian Police officers visited the Corps between July and August following a memorandum of association signed between the Government of Malta and the Palestinian Authority. The three officers, who all were above the rank of 'major', followed a one-month attachment programme with key sections and branches of the Force.

Attachment of German Police Officers

During July, two German Police officers also followed a two-week attachment policing programme prior to their attestation as sergeants in the German Police Force. The German officers were shown around various sections and branches of the Force where they were able to gain hands-on experience as to how their Maltese counterparts work, as a measure of routine, in their day-to-day duties.

New Police Academy

The plans for the new Police Academy were submitted to MEPA. Nevertheless, objections were *inter alia* raised by the National Commission Persons with Disability and hence the plans had to be modified and re-submitted. It is expected that work on the new academy will commence in 2010.

CEPOL meetings

This year, the Superintendent in charge of the local CEPOL office was, as in previous years, tasked to organise two meetings which were to be held in Malta under the auspices of the European Police College – CEPOL.

Between 3 and 4 September 2009, CEPOL's Annual Programme Committee met at one of the leading hotels in St Julians. Twenty-five participants attended the meeting, including three observers from Malta. The Malta Police Force hosted this meeting as a gesture of hospitality, given that Malta is currently a member not of the Annual Programme Committee but of the Training and Research Committee.

A CEPOL seminar on Fraud against the European Union and European institutions, including euro counterfeiting, was also held between 3 and 6 November 2009 at the same hotel. The meeting was chaired by the Assistant Commissioner Economic Crime. Seventeen participants from various EU Member States

participated. Supporting Member States for this international seminar were Italy and the United Kingdom. OLAF, Europol and the Commission were also supporting agencies. More than eight experts, both local and foreign, delivered lectures to the participants.

Police Band Concert

A Police Band Concert, to mark the 195th anniversary from the foundation of the Malta Police Force, was also held at the Mediterranean Conference Centre on 10 July. All logistic and programme arrangements were carried out by the administrative section of the Corps.

District of the Year Award

The internal competition held in connection with crime reduction between all police districts was won for the first time by Police District No 1 (Valletta, Floriana, New Port). This district managed to reduce the crime rate by 31.93%, when compared with the previous year. This is clearly illustrated in the following table:

Reported Crime by District				
District	2008	2009	Comparison	% Change
1	1,140	776	-364	-31.93
2	804	798	-6	-0.75
3	1,174	866	-308	-26.24
4	1,121	981	-140	-12.49
5	1,129	960	-169	-14.97
6	1,830	1,553	-277	-15.14
6A	2,083	2,015	-68	-3.26
7	1,026	985	-41	-4.00
8	932	824	-108	-11.59
9	1,726	1,587	-139	-8.05
10	579	487	-92	-15.89
GHQ	144	107	-37	-25.69
Total	16,688	11,939	-1,749	-12.78

Officer of the Year Award

The Award introduced in 2006 to identify that member of the Force who throughout the preceding year had manifested exceptional commitment to service, thereby upholding the highest traditions of the Force, was awarded to PC 986 Paul Spiteri stationed at District No 7 (Rabat).

Police Constable Spiteri went beyond his normal call of duty, when as he was on off-duty, intervened and managed to extinguish a vehicle which had caught fire in Dingli. Such action rendered safe both the passengers inside the vehicle and also the inhabitants residing in the surrounding area.

The award will be presented to PC 986 during the Annual Reunion ceremony scheduled for 3 January, 2010.

Certificates of Merit/Commendation

During 2009, two certificates of merit/commendation for outstanding performance were awarded by the Commissioner.

INTERNAL AFFAIRS UNIT

During 2009, the Internal Affairs Unit received and investigated 110 complaints against members of the Force. Besides, other investigations were initiated on the initiative of this unit, such as those following inspections or on receipt of confidential information.

The nature of complaints is shown hereunder; other investigations made by this Unit, which are not included in the list, include breaches of discipline during supervisory patrols, failure to attend court sittings, etc. 44 complaints have been concluded whilst the remainder are still being investigated or pending. The outcome of those concluded ranged from action before a disciplinary board or internal disciplinary action to no further action as allegations proved unjustified.

Nature of complaint	Reported	Concluded
Breaches of the provisions of the Malta Police Act	11	6
Breaches of the provisions of the Laws of Malta	10	3
Service not rendered	11	2
Failure to enforce the law	5	0
Others	73	33
Total	110	44

QUARTER MASTER STORES

During the year under review, various items were purchased and issued besides the usual uniform items and accoutrements. Six new motor cycles make BMW R1200RT were purchased for the Traffic Police, in addition to the other motorcycles in use. The Mobile Squad was supplied with 30 GPRSs, make 'Garmin' in their vehicles for better response, aimed at modernising the branch. Also the Central Delivery Office was supplied with 10 new motor cycles (*motorini*) make Peugeot which replaced the current fleet.

COMMUNITY AND MEDIA RELATIONS UNIT

Community Relations

The following are various tasks carried out by the Community Relations Unit during the year under review:

- Processing of requests for information by students, NGOs and the general public
- Handling of the Customer Care System and the OPRES (On-line Police Reporting System) as regards requests for information
- Liaison with other Police units for the Police Day programme
- Liaison was also effected with the various NGOs, local councils and schools requesting services of various Police Officers in educational talks, Traffic Safety Campaign, the services of the Police Band and Jazz Group and visits to the Police Academy and Museum and the Police Dog and Mounted Sections
- Quarterly publication of the Police Magazine
- Coordination for the visiting of the Last Supper Display for Schools and Local Councils
- Lectures in various schools re a career in the Police Force
- Coordination of visits to police sections (Police Museum, Crime Museum, Police Academy, Dog Section and Mounted Section) by students and other NGOs as required
- Introduction of Crime Prevention material such as posters and bookmarks in relation to crime, general theft, hold-ups, pick-pocketing, snatch and grab, theft of vehicles and theft from vehicles. Said material was distributed to all local councils, police stations and during talks in schools.

Media Relations

- Daily monitoring of news, both visual and radio, newspapers and internet, publications of press releases and co-ordination of press conferences
- Recording and monitoring of news bulletins and programmes were these concern the Police
- Arrangements as requested by the Media for interviews of police personnel
- Processing of requests for information for the Radio, TV and print media
- Liaison with producers from One TV (*Bongu Bundy* and *Kalamita*), PBS (*Bongu*), Favourite TV (*Mixkla*) and Education 22 (*Ghas-Servizz Tiegħek*) in connection with various Police participations on day-to-day running of police sections. Such programmes are on a weekly basis and run throughout the winter and part of the summer schedule

- Liaison with local producers as regards requests for filming for local programmes (requesting police assistance, uniforms and liaison with other police departments)

Type of Activity	No
Issuing of Press Releases	599
Replies to articles published through the Media	16

HUMAN RESOURCES BRANCH

This office was once again heavily committed during the year 2009, due to the Members of the European Parliament and the Local Councils Elections across the Maltese islands.

This event entailed major preparation and organisation by this office in the selection of police personnel to distribute voting documents either door-to-door or from the various police stations. Police officers were briefed, detailed and deployed accordingly to supervise polling places, to escort ballot boxes and finally, to sustain continuous supervision and order at the Naxxar Counting Hall and across other localities.

The Branch also performed the following activities:

- *Retirements*: During 2009, there were 40 cases of retirements/resignations from the Police Force (1 Assistant Commissioner, 1 Superintendent; 6 Sergeant Major; 6 Police Sergeant; 1 Woman Police Sergeant; 22 Police Constable; 3 Woman Police Constable).
- *Other HR functions*: The HR Office also examined confidential reports regarding Police personnel for eventual promotion from one scale to another, advancements and confirmation in their respective appointment. Medical and injury boards were also appointed by this office, together with the maintaining of records concerning sick and vacation leave, unpaid, emigration and responsibility leave, allowances and financial information in order to keep documentation for pension purposes.

This office kept updated members of the Force with all amendments regarding MPO and OPM Circulars, the Public Service Management Code, the Police Act (Chapter 164 of the Laws of Malta), and other directives issued by the Commissioner of Police. Consequently, various GHQ Circulars were released from this office so as to inform all the members of the Police Force with these new amendments.

- *Attestations*: Throughout 2009, as per call for applications for Police Constables issued on 10 March 2009, a total of 237 applications were received at this office. Same were duly processed and all applicants interviewed. 155 recruits were selected to commence a nine-month course at the Police Academy as from 7 October 2009. During the year under review, there were also four re-instatements.
- *Promotions*: During 2009, the following promotions were effected: three Superintendents appointed Assistant Commissioners and five Senior Inspectors appointed Superintendents.
- *Disciplinary Sitings*: This Office also issued disciplinary charges for offences against the Police Act. Five summary procedure sittings were held, during which 129 cases were heard.
- *Meetings Office*: During the year, this Office received and processed a total of 86 applications for the holding of public activities - 2 meetings, 109 public discussions, 10 protests/marches/conferences/manifestations, 1 demonstration, 5 mass meetings and 48 prayer meetings.

Training Programmes

As the new shift structure was introduced within the Malta Police Force, this Office was, for the third year running, responsible for the drawing up of the detail of duties for Police officers following training courses at the Police Academy.

Each and every member of the Force who performs his/her duties as per the new shift structure, attends for various training programmes at the Police Academy that include *core* and *non-core* sessions, small arms

shooting courses, physical training and other essential guiding skills that can surely assist in managing to efficiently perform ones' tour of duty.

Upgrading and Renovation of Police Stations/Branches

The following is a list of police stations/branches that were refurbished during 2009:

St Paul's Bay Police Station	Repairing of dangerous structure and refurbishing of all the Police Station including new furniture
Pitkali Police Station	Total refurbishing of all the Police Station including new office furniture and windows
Msida Yacht Marina	Total refurbishment of all the premises including replacement of all office furniture, orderly counter and interior doors
Msida Police Station	Manufacture and installation of new inner glazed doors (<i>anti-porta</i>), plastering and white-washing of façade
Cospicua Police Station	Manufacture and installation of new inner glazed doors (<i>anti-porta</i>), refurbishing of orderly room and counter
Balzan, Żebbug, Sliema, St Julians Police Stations	Manufacture and installation of new inner glazed doors (<i>anti-porta</i>)
Żejtun Police Station	Repairing of dangerous structure, changing of roofs, manufacture and installation of new inner glazed doors (<i>anti-porta</i>), replacement of all office furniture, orderly counter and windows (<i>still in progress</i>)
Qormi Police Station	Manufacture and replacement of three interior wooden doors
Mellieha Police Station	Repairing of dangerous structure, changing of roofs, replacement of all office furniture, orderly counter and windows (<i>still in progress</i>)
Fgura Police Station	Total refurbishing of all the Police Station including new office furniture and windows
Forensic Science Laboratory	Refurbishing of office, furniture, shelving and main doors
Community & Media Relations Unit	Refurbishing of office, furniture and shelving
Statistics Office	Refurbishing of office, furniture and shelving
Inspectors' Offices at Valletta, Żurrieq, Fgura, Żejtun, B'Buġa Police Stations and Special Branch Office; Paola Police Station Office; Police Chaplain	Refurbishing of office including new furniture
Gozo Marina Office, Mgarr	Setting up of a new office including new furniture
International Relations Unit	Manufacture of new furniture for office
Police Medical Officer's Inspection Room	Manufacture of new furniture and shelving for office
Sergeant Major St Julian's Office	Manufacture of new furniture for office
Ta' Kandja, Detention Centre	Manufacture of 200 bunk beds, iron security doors, new parameter electricity, plumbing and placing of razor blade around all four internal yards (currently housing irregular immigrants)
Balzan Dormitory	Refurbishing of dormitory including new furniture
CID Lock-Up, Laundry Room	Refurbishing of room including new furniture
Menqa Police Station	Repairing of dangerous structure, plastering and white-washing of premises (currently housing the Malta Police Association)
Drivers Restroom at Garage, Floriana	Refurbishing of premises including plastering, white-washing, laying of floor / wall tiles, showers and toilets
MT Restroom at Garage, Floriana	Refurbishing of premises including plastering, white-washing, plumbing, electricity, laying of floor/wall tiles, showers, toilets and new furniture
MT Garage Petrol Pump	Manufacture and replacement of tent
MT Garage Dormitory	Refurbishing of dormitory including new furniture
GHQ façade	Embellishment works on all façade of Police General Headquarters including replacement of stone banisters and stones (<i>still in progress</i>)
CID Yard	Repairing of dangerous structure by replacing stone slabs
Dogs Section	Refurbishing of premises including plastering, white-washing, plumbing, electricity and other repairs
Traffic/Administrative Law Enforcement Sections	Refurbishing of premises including plastering, white-washing, plumbing, electricity, laying of floor/wall tiles, showers, toilets and new furniture (<i>still in progress</i>)

Other everyday requirements in the respective police stations and branches, such as plastering, whitewashing, plumbing, electricity, network cables, installation & maintenance of air conditioners, lifts,

drainage systems, membrane repairs, carpentry works, repairing of barriers, traffic signs and other needs were taken in hand on a regular basis, in order to keep the best working environment in all Police premises, for the best interest of the public in general and the staff thereat.

IT SERVICES

During the year, the IT Services continued to work towards strengthening the Malta Police Force network and ICT services through a number of initiatives. The unit also continued to prepare for two major projects namely the SIS II migration and the Prüm Council Decision project. Both are large-scale projects that are expected to be completed, in the majority, during the 2010. This is no easy task considering the effort needed to manage and implement these large scale projects utilising only the minimal resources available.

Schengen Information System (SIS)

The IT Services, through NSIS MT, was responsible for the management and upkeep of all connectivity and interaction with the Schengen Information System since 2007. This process involves ensuring that access is available to the SIS on a 24x7 basis and that all national applications interact with data available through the same system.

During 2009, access to SIS data was not available for a period of 7 hours scheduled maintenance downtime and 2½ hours unplanned downtime. This represents a 99.90% up-time. The unplanned downtime was the result of several power failures attributed to the national power grid and malfunctions in the existing backup generator.

Immediate remedial action was taken and a tender process initiated for the procurement and installation for an emergency generator specifically for the IT Services building. This will cater for both the SIS related systems and future implementations.

Equipment procured through a call for tender launched in 2008, was installed in the Police Data Centre during the second quarter of 2009. This equipment will be used to migrate from the current SIS1+RE system to the new SIS II. Works on the Police backup data centre are expected to be completed during 2010. Security and safety equipment procured through the Norwegian Funds Mechanism was also implemented during 2009 thus ensuring the security of all buildings housing Schengen related data.

Police Incident Reporting System II

The Police Incident Reporting System, now in operation since September 2007, was enhanced with additional modules for the benefit of better communications between different sections of the Police Force. The PIRS II Messaging Module, was added to facilitate internal communications between the different branches and sections that form the Malta Police Force. This module has replaced a similar communication platform that was previously available in the former PIRS I.

Another major milestone is the inclusion of images with the PIRS II. This new addition serves a number of requirements. The PIRS II was enhanced with an internal alert mechanism that communicates information and images of wanted or missing person and objects to all officers that have access to the system. The alerts are very visible and have already proved to be a success. The PIRS II was also linked to information obtained from the Common Database and the Electoral Office. Images related to the latter will be made available during 2010.

Perhaps not so visible, works are currently underway to ensure that the PIRS II is compatible with the forthcoming SISII system. All changes related to SIS II will be concluded by 2010 unless the overall SIS II project is delayed. During 2009, steps were also taken to ensure that the PIRS II is not only compatible

with a forthcoming criminal records system but will also provide a single work-flow solution that will provide not only a crime reporting tool but will also manage follow-up action and conclusions.

Border Control System

The existing Border Control System remained operational during 2009 with minimal downtime. To ensure the availability of this important system, core infrastructure was updated and consolidated. The Marina border control point was transferred from its former location in Ta' Xbiex to new premises in Msida. New IT infrastructure was provided to ensure the availability of border control services at this new office. The IT Services also installed new infrastructure in a new border control office implemented at the Malta Freeport. The border control system will, during 2010, be strengthened through the creation of a new access point at the Mġarr (Gozo) yacht Marina. Alterations to the locations were suggested by the IT Services in order to fulfil all security measures as required by the EU in order to segregate Police/Schengen information from easy access to the public.

Supply of a Digital Printer and Image Repository System

Another project that was concluded during 2009 was the supply of a digital printer and image repository system. This new system is utilised by the Forensic Science Laboratory but will, in the future, be extended to interact with the PIRS II. The system, referred to as HALSE, allows Scene of the Crime Officers to store all the photographic evidence that is collected on the scene of a crime. Such information is then presented in court as evidence. Special software and security measures were acquired to safeguard the integrity and security of evidence. The ICT infrastructure of HALSE is fully functional and is installed at the IT Services data centre.

Burial Permits On-line

The design and implementation of the Burial Permits On-line system was concluded during 2009. This new system, as the name implies, will allow for the capture and processing of all burial permits. This will replace a manual process that is applicable to date. The system will operate within a government-wide system that will involve the Health and Social Security Departments.

Fleet Management System (FMS)

During 2009, a request was made to implement a new Fleet Management System (FMS) that would manage and control vehicle related expenditure within the Malta Police Force. This forms part of a government-wide initiative. Due to the unique nature of police infrastructure, a secure and effective solution was designed. This will be implemented during 2010 following the procurement of hardware and software through a tender process.

Europol Systems

During 2008, a decision was taken by the Europol management board, to disseminate the responsibility of maintaining the information exchange systems between the central organisation and its members, to the same member states. Malta undertook this new responsibility during October 2009. This transition implied the creation of user roles as implied by Europol Central, with each of them having individual responsibility in the dissemination of information and users within the Police Force.

Infrastructure - Police Domain

The Police Domain, FORCE, was substantiated with additional storage capacity to manage online storage and backup services for all users within the Malta Police. This was only possible through the consolidation

of all computers belonging to the Malta Police Force that are now assigned to this domain. A total number of 500 computers are now connected to this domain and share the same security and operational policy.

Provision of new computers

99 new computers were deployed during 2009 by the IT Services. 51 of these were obtained through funding made available by the Transition Facility tender issued during 2007. The remaining 48 are the result of upgrading and procurement of new hardware.

A Leasing Contract related to the provision of computers was reviewed by this department and a tailor-made version respecting the unique security and operational requirements of the Malta Police Force was drafted after discussions with MITA and the Ministry for Justice and Home Affairs. The Leasing Agreement will cover part of the computers owned by the Malta Police, which amounts up to 400 units in total. This has been approved and signed by all parties involved and will commence during January 2010.

The existing police network was extended to incorporate the Marsascala Police Station. This station has been provided with access to all police systems currently deployed. Similarly our network was extended to provide network services to offices pertaining to the Special Branch (Immigration). Upgrade works were also carried out by members of the IT Services on the existing links between the IT Services building and the main Police General Headquarters location. This was necessary following the increase of users and services that required additional bandwidth and resilience.

During the second quarter of 2009, an exercise was carried out and a total of 17 network switches were replaced. This was part of the ongoing restructuring for police stations and the General Headquarters.

Several other initiatives were also launched during 2009. The following is a list of tenders that have been drafted and launched during 2009 and will be closed during 2010:

- connection of additional seven police stations to the police network: This tender will give the facility to smaller police stations to connect to all police systems available. These new stations are; Santa Lucia, Balzan, Ċirkewwa, Marsalforn, St Paul's Bay, Mtarfa and Siġġiewi. The tender was awarded and works are scheduled for early 2010.
- procurement of hand held computers: These devices are intended to be used as mobile devices in which police officers on the street can have direct access to police resources.
- supply of air-conditioners: Funded through the external border funds as the above, these air conditioners are intended to be used for both data centres at Police GHQ and MIA.
- supply and hardware necessary to support the introduction of a DNA database: The tender is expected to be launched during the first part of 2010. The IT Services was involved in required pre-tender research and tender drafting.

Help Desk Services

One key aspect of the IT Services is to provide help desk facilities to all users on a 24x7 basis. Assistance is provided to both internal police users and international colleagues in relation to systems such as the SIS and Europol.

During 2009 the Police Networks Operations Centre managed and assisted 5,560 calls. 2,230 additional requests for assistance required call-outs (an officer from the IT Services was required to call on-site). 957 network incidents were also registered during the same period requiring direct intervention by members of the IT Services. This workload is an indication of the dependency of the Malta Police Force on IT systems. This workload will definitely increase over the next few months considering the number of new projects in the pipeline. Hence the continuous need to recruit new staff that will enable the continuation of the services provided by the IT Services.

In May 2009 the Police IT Services provided IT support during the EP Elections by implementing a CCTV system necessary to provide security and crowd control services.

Training

- One of the roles of the IT Services is to provide end-user training to all police officers in relation to specific computer based systems. During the course of the year, 203 officers were trained in the use of the Police Incident Reporting System II. These officers were trained on how to best make use of the systems functionality and services.
- Additional training was also provided to 51 police officers that have been nominated by the Commissioner to attend CEPOL courses abroad. It is worth noting that during 2009, 4,650 hits were registered against the CEPOL-Malta website. This indicates an increasing interest in CEPOL.
- 150 new recruits were trained at the Police Academy in relation to communication systems that are available to the Malta Police Force vis-à-vis Schengen, Interpol and Europol. This is important training as it creates awareness on the potential of police cooperation through the exchange of information.
- 110 e-mail accounts were made to various police officers after receiving training on the subject.

Cyber Crime Unit

As expected, the workload and the number of computer-related crimes continued to increase during the year. Although it is difficult to provide clear statistics related to computer-based crimes (due to the fact that computer-related crimes are generally entwined with other “traditional” crime categories), the unit received 317 requests for assistance during 2009. It is expected that this upsurge in computer crime will continue to increase in the foreseeable future as new cheaper technologies are introduced and used by a wider customer base.

Reported Crime

As already stated, it is difficult to quantify the number of computer-based crimes that are reported to the police. Nevertheless the table below indicates the number of call-outs submitted to the unit requesting assistance in computer-based investigations. In comparison with 2008, the unit experienced an increase of 13.63% call-outs during the year. The predominant categories are computer misuse, fraud and child abuse.

Category	2008	2009	Difference	% Change
Adult Pornography	10	3	-7	-70.00
Child Abuse	17	11	-6	-35.29
Child Indecent Material	23	29	6	26.09
Computer Misuse	72	79	7	9.72
Copyright Infringement	7	0	-7	-100.00
Counterfeit	0	2	2	100.00
Defamation	13	18	5	38.46
Forgery	2	0	-2	-100.00
Fraud	51	68	17	33.33
Human Trafficking	1	1	0	0.00
Illegal Gambling	2	1	-1	-50.00
Incitement to Racial Hatred	0	0	0	0.00
Missing Persons	5	4	-1	-20.00
Murder	1	1	0	0.00
Phishing	3	1	-2	-66.67
Terrorism	3	2	-1	-33.33
Theft	2	1	-1	-50.00
Threats	48	65	17	35.42
Other	19	31	12	63.16
Total	279	317	38	13.62

During the same investigations, the unit collected 1,663 items to be analysed and documented. Although the unit has collected less computer systems than the previous year, it is important to note that in relation to storage space (hard disks), more additional services were actually collected and analysed.

Category	2008	2009	Difference	% Change
Computers Systems	113	97	-16	-14.16
Hard disk drives (Internal/External)	125	154	29	23.20
Optical Disks/DVDs	5,005	1,335	-3,670	-73.33
3.5" Floppy Diskettes	37	34	-3	-8.11
Other Media	82	43	-39	-47.56
Documents and Printed Evidence etc.	31	0	-31	-100.00
Total	5,393	1,663	-3,730	-69.16

Crime Prevention Initiatives

The Cyber Crime Unit was involved in a number of crime prevention initiatives. The unit was involved in 52 public talks that were focused on creating awareness on how to avoid becoming a victim of computer related crime and how to react should an incident occur. The meetings were designed to address the specific needs of focus groups, namely, teaching staff, parents and youths and students. The unit was also invited to participate in eight talks shows on local media.

Perhaps the most important crime prevention measure that was introduced during 2009 was the introduction of an online filter to block known child abuse related Internet webpages. Being a forerunner group in the COSPOL – CIRCAMP working party, the Malta Police Force had agreed to participate in this effective preventative measure. Eight local Internet service providers have agreed to participate in this voluntary preventative measure and are currently blocking nearly 800 known child abuse webpages. Another Internet service provider is currently testing and is scheduled to go “live” during the first quarter 2010.

The Cyber Crime Unit also continued towards strengthening partnerships with local and international agencies in an attempt to prevent computer related crimes. Most notably, the unit has strengthened relationships with *Agenzija Appogg*, local internet and communication service providers, *Telefono Arcobaleno* (Italy), The FBI Innocent Images Task Force (USA), the National Centre for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) of the United States of America, Microsoft Corporation, Hi5 and Facebook.

International Participation

The unit also participated in a number of international conferences, seminars and training programmes. These included:

- FBI’s Innocent Images Task Force Training Programme. The Cyber Crime Unit is now a full member of this International Task Force
- Live Data Forensics Course organised by AGIS in Vienna, Austria
- Secure Workshops related to Critical Infrastructure organised in Malta
- Masters (MSc) in Forensic Computing and Cyber Crime Investigations. A member of the team is expected to graduate in September 2011
- COSPOL – CIRCAMP operational and strategic meetings
- Child Safety on the Internet – Prevention, education and Cooperation workshop organised by the Baltic Sea States and the European Commission
- EU-US Co-operation on Cyber Crime matters organised by the EU Commission
- Commonwealth Network (COM-NET) conference on computer crime.

Statistics Office

During 2009, the Statistics Office produced a number of monthly and annual reviews providing police senior management with crime statistics necessary to address crime patterns and trends. These reports

provided necessary information that allowed the Police Force to prepare and implement a strategy to reduce reported crime.

This office also published a number of ad hoc reports related to parliamentary questions, information requests submitted by the media, students, organisations and the general public. This office also published a number of thematic reports that were requested by other police sections and branches.

Members of the Statistics Office were also involved in the development of the Police Incident Reporting System providing the basis on which a road accident module will be designed. The road accident module will be finalised and implemented during 2010.

POLICE ACADEMY

The main objective of the Police Academy remains that of teaching and training its members and recruits to be as professional as possible to fulfil their role in the Malta Police Force with ability, knowledge and expertise, integrity and impartiality, effectively and efficiently. With this objective in mind, courses and seminars to officers and also to the other ranks remain the top priority.

Several training courses were organised during the year:

- 17 seminars on various topics, which included Maltese legislation and case-law were held for officers. Three seminars were held exclusively for 2nd Class Sergeant Majors.
- Courses addressed to the other ranks, meaning 2nd Sergeant Majors, Sergeants and Constables were held regularly every month throughout the year. Collectively, during 2009, the attendance of these members (other ranks) reached 23,449 training sessions. These courses which are tailor-made to the officers' duties, consisted of academic subjects, firearm handling and shooting, pepper spray use and Taser handling. Physical education and unarmed combat were also included.
- In October-December, a course of training leading for promotion to Police Sergeants was held for 64 constables.
- On 1 October, 137 new recruits commenced a nine-month long training programme which eventually will lead them to graduating as probationary police constables. This 30th Basic Training Course is expected to come to an end during June 2010.
- Educational/career visits from 22 different schools visited the Police Academy. Not less than 729 students participated in these visits.

During the year, the Police Academy Board met on a number of occasions and discussed various issues including the New Police Academy, Basic Training Course Regulations and Curriculum for Police Trainees and the general direction and the policies of the Academy as stipulated in the Police Act. The progress of the New Police Academy at Ta' Kandja was also on the agenda of these Board meetings.

LEGAL & EU AFFAIRS

Police Legal Office

The Police Legal Office was originally set up in October 2000 as a Prosecution Unit. However, due to needed adjustments there were some comprehensive changes in the active role of this Office. The Office now deals mainly with legal affairs concerning the Police Force in general, as further explained in detail below. Furthermore, an officer of this Office has been nominated as the Data Protection representative for the Commissioner of Police as well as the Freedom of Information Officer to represent the Commissioner of Police in all matters relating to Freedom of Information as per OPM Circular No 17/2009.

Tasks of the Legal Office

The Legal office is responsible from various tasks which are listed hereunder:

Legal Advice

This office delivers both oral and written advice/opinions on various legal matters mainly criminal, administrative and civil matters to other sections of the Malta Police. Members of this office are faced on a daily basis with the evaluation of criminal cases where the investigating officers seek the advice of this office as to whether a case merits a prosecution or not. These cases are discussed in depth jointly with the investigating officer and cases will be scrutinised to establish if there is enough evidence to obtain a conviction in Court. On other occasions, this office is consulted to establish whether a case is one of a criminal nature or not.

The functions of the Malta Police require that they are not only involved in cases of a criminal nature but also with administrative matters such as issuing of licences for weapons, explosives and certain commercial activities that are held on specific days. Constantly the Legal Office is consulted on the correct procedure for the processing of licences and furthermore for revocation of licences and other administrative measures in those areas where the police are competent to act. This Office was also approached to assist in those cases which are heard before the Police Licences Tribunal where the Police would have objected to issue a licence for a one-off event.

Members of this Office also submit opinions on cases of civil nature that the Malta Police is involved in. The most common civil cases are those involving the title of ownership or possession of premises being used as police stations, traffic collisions where police vehicles are involved and giving advice on judicial acts notified to the Police. Furthermore, members of this Office occasionally appear on behalf of the Commissioner of Police in civil cases.

Assistance in Prosecutions

The Legal Office assists police prosecuting officers by discussing any legal issues that crop up during the hearing of criminal offences before the Court of Magistrates. It assists prosecuting officers in compiling note of submissions and replying to court decrees. In some cases, legal officers appear in court to assist prosecution officers during the criminal proceedings. Moreover, this Office is also responsible for the conduct of prosecutions before the Juvenile Court and occasionally before the Family Court when the Vice Squad Inspectors are not available due to other work commitments.

Drafting of Domestic Laws

This Office is in charge of the initial drafting of domestic laws related to the Police. This year the Office was involved in the drafting of amendment to the Traffic Ordinance and Regulations, the Commissioners of Justice Act, and other laws relating to underage drinking. The main amendments to the Traffic Ordinance consisted mainly in amending the Breathalyser test provisions and the introduction of a new apparatus. Further amendments consisted in raising the penalties for breaching of traffic regulations and also some traffic offences were shifted from the competence of the Court to the competence of the Tribunals.

This office is currently reviewing and studying amendments to the Conduct Certificate Ordinance.

Transposition of EU laws

The Legal Office is also involved in the transposition of EU laws into national legislation. This year this office prepared the transposition of some of the provisions of the Prüm Council Decision. These transpositions have been scrutinised by the Attorney General's office and are being included in the Bill which is going to amend various criminal laws and is due to be issued shortly.

Several meetings were held with officials of the Ministry for Justice and Home Affairs (MJHA) on the transposition of other EU legal instruments such as the:

- Return Directive for returning illegally staying third country nationals;
- Weapons Directive;
- Mutual Recognition of Decisions on the Expulsion of Third Country Nationals (this directive has been transposed in the Immigration Act by Act XVIII of 2009).

Attending Domestic meetings on legal affairs

Members of this Office participated in meetings with other public authorities relating to domestic legal affairs which may have law enforcement implications. During this year, this Office attended meetings held jointly with the:

- Malta Tourism Authority and the Trading Licensing Unit regarding the issue of bottle shops in particular those situated in the Paceville Area;
- Gaming Authority on the problems that Prosecuting Officers face in Court when prosecuting offences relating to Gaming;
- Data Protection Commissioner and with the OPM on data protection;
- MJHA on the discussions for the necessary amendments to the Explosives Ordinance and the Arms Act.

Attending EU working groups

Members of this Office attended a number of EU working groups mainly:

- Multi Disciplinary Group on Organised Crime (MDG);
- Police Cooperation Working Party (held monthly);
- Data Protection;
- Eurojust National Correspondent meetings.

Prior to these EU meetings an amount of preparation is required. Officers attending such meetings have to acquire feedback from other police departments and also discuss certain topics with MJHA to coordinate Malta's position during the discussions at EU level. Following these meetings, apart from compiling the required report in particular where legal issues have been discussed, this Office will also scrutinise domestic laws and highlight which laws may require certain amendments.

The Legal Office was appointed as the national correspondent for Eurojust and thus participates in meetings which deal with the Eurojust national coordination system. This system includes the participation from the AG's Office and MITA for the necessary network.

Implementation of EU projects

The major project that this Office is significantly involved in is the implementation of the Prüm project. Various discussions and meetings were held this year on this project, both internally and also with other parties that have a direct link in the project, which are MJHA, MITA and ADT. In view of this project, a study visit took place in Luxembourg in January. In this study visit, the Luxembourgish authorities explained in detail what this project entails. After this visit, the Police had a better insight and knowledge to start preparing for this task.

This year was dedicated for the scoping study of the Prüm project to be able to prepare the necessary tender documents for the new AFIS and DNA databases. The DNA tender document is ready and the AFIS tender document is in its final stages and these tenders documents should be issued early in 2010.

The Commission in 2009 approved a financial grant based on an application for funds that Malta submitted the previous year. Following extensive amendments and justifications, the application was eventually approved in November 2009. Funding from the Commission amounted to €1,845,327.

This Office assists also in the project for the computerisation of the Criminal Records System. Several meetings were held with MITA and the Criminal Investigations Department on the implementation of this project. Furthermore this Office is examining what is required from a legal perspective for the implementation of this project.

Lectures at the Police Academy

Officers of the Legal Office delivered lectures at the Police Academy to new police recruits, in-service police officers and also to police constables the course leading to the promotion of sergeants.

Data Protection & Freedom of Information

This Office has this year been involved in the Data Protection Audit of various police branches. The officer in charge attended several meetings with the Data Protection Commissioner and OPM staff on the issuing of the Subject Access Request, for which this Office is responsible for the handling of such requests. This Office tackles paper work and files where data protection issues are involved.

An Officer at Inspector level was recently nominated as the Freedom of Information Officer. This task further increases the workload of this Office. In the near future, this Office has to deal with any request to make available certain information or documents to third parties. It is envisaged that the Freedom of Information Act will increase the workload of this Office and further strain the already limited human resources.

POLICE EU OFFICE

The Police EU Office is an integral part of the Malta Police Force. Set up upon Malta's accession to the EU in 2004, this office is still being structured according to EU specifications, in order to meet the standards of other EU member states.

The purpose of this office is to assist the Malta Police Force in carrying out its EU-related business such as: collating information related to the EU; raising the Malta's Police Force profile in the EU; and developing regional links.

- The EU Office is responsible for the handling of classified documentation which is regulated by a number of laws which, *inter alia*, include the following: the Official Secrets Act (Cap 50); the Professional Secrets Act (Cap 377); the Security Service Act (Cap 391); the Code of Organization and Civil Procedure (Cap 12); and the Data Protection Act (Cap 440).

A main function of the Police EU Office is the processing of documents received from various ministries as well as from other EU entities and agencies such as Frontex, CEPOL, the European Commission, Europol and international organisations such as Interpol. Information received differs from EU legislation such as council decisions and regulations to invitations to attend training programmes for police officers. These training programmes and courses offer police personnel a chance to acquaint themselves with new methods of policing operated abroad thus enhancing efficiency and competency in the Malta Police Force.

On several occasions, the Malta Police Force has been requested by different organisations to host meetings in Malta. As a means of demonstrating our commitment, the EU office is often involved in the coordination and logistical requirements of such meetings and training courses.

The number of invitations received for officers to travel abroad during the year amounts to a total of 899 invitations. Average acceptance of participation to these invitations amounts to 43.8%.

The following courses, meetings, conferences, seminars were attended during the period under review:

EU Council Working Groups	No. of Meetings	Locality	No. of Attendees
Horizontal Drug Group (HDG)	10	Brussels	10
Frontiers Mixed Committee	8	Brussels	8
Frontiers Working Party (false documents)	4	Brussels	4
SCIFA Meeting	6	Brussels	6
SIS SIRENE Meeting	10	Brussels	10
CIREFI Meeting	5	Brussels	5
SIS TECH Meeting	12	Brussels; Ljubljana	12
Multidisciplinary Group on Organised Crime (MDG)	12	Brussels	12
Schengen Evaluation /Acquis Working Party	13	Brussels	13
Migration Expulsion/Admission Meeting	2	Brussels	2
Dublin Group Meeting	3	Brussels	3
Police Cooperation Working Party Meeting (PCWP)	12	Brussels	12
PCTF Meetings	2	Brussels; The Netherlands	2
Ad hoc Information Exchange Meeting	11	Brussels	11
Data Protection Evaluation Meeting	1	Brussels	1
Asylum Working Party	5	Brussels	5
Total	116		116

PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS OFFICE

Parliamentary questions are of an urgent nature having priority on other work and are to be replied by a specified date normally at very short notice.

During 2009 this office dealt with 400 parliamentary questions all concerning the Police Department. This entailed clerical duties consisting of registration of files, maintaining manual and computerised indexes, conducting research work on past questions on subject matter in order to prepare background information, distribution of parliamentary questions to the respective districts and specialised branches as well as urgently required replies to prepare summarised drafts.

General Collection

Each quarter, on receiving their salary, all members of the Force are required to pay a contribution in respect of the general fund, the Mutual Help Association and the Malta Police Association. After paying their contributions at their respective districts and sections, the funds are brought over to this office where reconciliation is carefully made. The funds are then deposited at the Accounts section. An estimated amount of €105,050 has been handled during the year under review.

Further work relating to these collections is involved in order to collect payments from late paying members as well being cited to testify in disciplinary proceedings against those members of the Force who fail to comply.

Mutual Help Association

During the year the sum of €40,600.97 was, on behalf of the Commissioner, given through this office to 25 families of deceased ex-members of the Force whilst a contribution (amounting to about €13,980 in all) was collected from 1,008 ex-members who either called personally at this office or sent their payment by post as well as through serving members.

International Police Association

During 2009 this office has also served as the official IPA office within the Police Headquarters, for information and customer care purposes, and for renewal of IPA memberships. About 40 foreign IPA

members and their respective families, who came to Malta for vacation, visited the Police General Headquarters. They were all welcomed at the IPA office for the customary reception.

DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

Finance and Administration

The Finance and Administration Department is responsible for financial management and budgetary control; business and financial planning; procurement; co-ordination and follow-up of all EU-related initiatives and programmes, and the provision of ongoing administrative support to the line operations of the Police Department.

Regular consultation was kept with the various sections in the Department as well as with the Commissioner of Police and senior personnel, to ensure that the objectives and goals of the Police Force are achieved within budgetary allocations, and to ascertain that the expenditure is monitored and controlled according to the approved allocations under the five cost centres of the Police Department. Financial returns were regularly provided to the Ministry of Finance, outlining any variations required on the items of expenditure.

Constant momentum was kept on the progress of a number of EU co-funded ongoing projects undertaken by the Police Department, in liaison with the Project Leaders and Funds Manager at the EU Affairs Unit of the Ministry for Justice and Home Affairs. Administrative support was also provided in a number of public tenders involving the procurement of services and equipment co-financed by the EU, as well as others of a routine nature.

Certainly, since Malta joined the EU a constant increase in the number of visits abroad by police personnel was registered during 2009. The total number of visits during the year was 522, and this had an impact on the Travel allocation, provided by the Ministry of Finance for the year.

Accounts/Procurement Section

The Accounts and Procurement Section was responsible for the financial management of funds allocated under Vote 43 – Police. Returns containing revised budget estimates were compiled on a monthly basis, and forwarded to the Ministry of Finance, accordingly. Constant financial and Administrative support was also provided to the line operations of the Police Department in connection with the purchases and relative payments for items required from time to time. Support and advice was also provided during the process of a number of public tenders, for the procurement of: traffic motor cycles, motor scooters, bullet proof vests, GPRSs, dispensing fuel pump, a number of second hand vehicles and a number of lightbars for the same cars imported from the UK. Other than the normal purchases by tender, for the procurement of police uniform items, during this year, we have seen the completion of the installation of the new Digital Photographic Laboratory which will greatly enhance the facilities available to the Police whilst performing investigations.

During 2009, preparations were also made for the purchase of specialised dogs to be delivered in early 2010 from the UK. These dogs will be trained by a special instructor who is expected to accompany the dogs on their way to Malta, and will provide the necessary advice to the Malta Police Department regarding the upkeep of the Malta Police Dogs Section.

The following is a table showing expenditure during the years 2008 and 2009:

Recurrent Expenditure	2008 €	2009 €
Personal Emoluments	39,303,900	40,275,761
Operational & Maintenance	4,010,536	4,288,962
Special Expenditure	10,000	6,021
Total	43,324,436	44,570,744
Capital Expenditure	632,000	663,356

Another function assigned to this section is the issue of certificates denoting the classification of films, trailers, and stage productions. The following is a statistical record of classification certificates issued during 2009:

Rating	Films	Trailers	Stage Productions
U	28	126	7
12	23	13	2
14	40	3	6
PG	35	29	2
16	55	4	16
18	78	48	8
Banned	1	1	1

Assistance was also provided on the various boards concerning collisions involving police vehicles. 17 board meetings were held to assess a total of 123 cases.

Human Resources (Civilian Personnel) Section

Apart from the routine duties and requirements of the civilian staff stationed at the Police Headquarters, the HR Section managed the personnel requirements of the 61 Immigration Officers stationed at the Malta International Airport. In line with the Public Service Management Code, the HR Section dealt with a number of salary scale progressions including the submission of appraisal reports and the drawing up of letters of appointment or progression. Performance Management Programmes reports were drawn up for the 89 officers entitled to such a report. Records of regular attendance, vacation leave and sick leave were maintained throughout the year in respect of civilian personnel.

The head of section also participated as a panel member on a number of selection boards and vetted all the public tenders processed by the Department. A number of parliamentary questions concerning matters related to personnel were drafted and referred for the final submission.

Revenue Section

The Revenue Section was responsible for the cash generated from the licences, taxes, fines, and other fees collected from Police District Offices, Criminal Records Office, ID Cards Section, Police Licences Office, Seaport, Weapons Section, Central Immigration Office and Principal Citations Office, and other miscellaneous income due to the Police Department, including any dues derived from collision cases with police vehicles. All revenue was deposited regularly and reconciled with the statements received from commercial banks.

The following table is a breakdown of revenue generated during 2009:

Item	2009 €
Sporting Licences	827,605
Traffic Offence Tickets	163
Miscellaneous Licences	61,363
Miscellaneous Fines	29,486
Permits/Certificates	294,587
Fees on Visas	15,921*
Services to Third Parties	377,709
Road Accident Reports	37,982
Miscellaneous Receipts	47,814
Total	1,692,630

* Started being collected during 2009, by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Salaries Section

Adjustments on salaries, allowances, overtime, bonus, and income supplement were regularly processed in a timely manner to meet the payment deadlines established by the Treasury Department, in respect of the 2165 uniformed and civilian personnel. Returns were regularly prepared which included the entitlement of extra duty performed by police personnel for third parties, such as at commercial banks, private functions, sports activities etc.

Secretariat/Registry Services

Apart from the routine operation, normally associated with a registry, this Section managed and handled a good number of police files and incoming and outgoing correspondence, as well as official circulars distributed in all Police District Offices and Police General Headquarters.

The following is a statistical data collected for 2009:

Letters received from government departments, authorities and the general public	20,000
New files opened	7,300
Correspondence letters received and logged in their appropriate files	12,000
Reports/letters were prepared and typed	15,000
Letters addressed to government departments and private entities	34,300

Other activities performed by this Section included the tracking of Death Certificates, Judicial Acts, Process Verbal, tickets of Admission in respect of unpaid Court fines, archiving of files, referring notices to the Department of Information by electronic mail of all traffic deviation during National activities, village feasts etc, for publication in the Government Gazette.

This Section also kept updated records related to proceedings against public officers, proceedings against commercial establishments, appeals, and tickets of admission (DKR).

INVESTIGATIVE SERVICES

CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION DEPARTMENT

The mission of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) is to strive to be a leader in the investigation of serious crimes and prevention of crime in general, thus contributing towards a safer and more stable environment. To fulfil its mission, the CID has been constantly endeavouring to ameliorate its structure in order to respond to its responsibilities.

Responsibilities

The primary responsibility of the CID remains that of investigating serious crimes. In addition to its primary role, the CID, in tandem with its sister unit (Mobile Squad) is committed to an equally important role of addressing the problem of crime proactively. This secondary but important commitment proved to be a very effective way in reducing the risk and fear of crime. In fact statistics demonstrate that the crime rate has once again been reduced during 2009. Undoubtedly, CID and Mobile Squad have contributed to such achievement.

During 2009, a total of 814 CID case files were originated for investigation. These investigations led to the arrest and the interviewing of 1,456 persons, out of which 525 were detained for more than six hours. As a result, 438 cases were solved, of which 426 cases were presented in court with a total of 241 arraignments that involved the prosecution of 282 persons. Of the latter, eight persons were under the age of 18. Out of the 438 cases solved during the year, 12 cases resulting in 11 arraignments totalling to 28 offences and involving 12 persons are yet to be prosecuted in Court.

The following is a list of offences instituted in court during 2009 in connection with the above-mentioned cases. This list includes the number of arraignments related to cases solved prior to 2008:

Arraignments of Solved Offences - 2009	Arraignments	Offences presented in Court	Persons Arraigned	Over 18 yrs		Minors under 18yrs	
				Males	Females	Males	Females
Arraignments of offences solved in 2008	241	1,072	282	255	19	6	2
Arraignments of offences solved prior to 2008	9	28	10	7	1	1	1
Total	250	1,100	292	262	20	7	3

Offences presented in Court 2009	
GN292-1939 Possession and trafficking of heroin, cocaine and methadone	8
108 Chap 9 False swearing	2
101 Chap 9 Calumnious accusations	3
110(1) Chap 9 Fabrication of false evidence	3
110(2) Chap 9 Simulation of offence	9
111(2) Chap 9 Suppression, destruction or alteration of traces of crime	1
111(1) Chap 9 Hindering person from giving necessary information or evidence	1
138 Chap 10 Unlawful entry in a cemetery	1
139 Chap 10 Wilful damage to a cemetery	1
163 Chap 9 Vilification of Religion	1
167 Chap 9 Forgery of documents	2
183 Chap 9 Forgery of public, commercial or private bank documents by person etc.	3
184 Chap 9 Malicious use of false documents	3
186 Chap 9 Use of false documents	1
187 Chap 9 Forgery of private writing	1
188 Chap 9 False declarations or information to a public authority	9
189 Chap 9 Other kinds of forgery and use of false documents	11
211 Chap 9 Wilful homicide	3
216 Chap 9 Grievous bodily harm	14
22 Chap 416 Absolute or conditional discharge	22
22 Chap 101 possession of drugs within 100 mtrs from school etc	1
221 Chap 9 Slight bodily harm	18
226 Chap 9 Involuntary bodily harm	1
249 Chap 9 Threats by means of writings	2
251 Chap 9 Private violence	5
251A Chap 9 Harassment	1
251B Chap 9 Fear of violence	6
261 Chap 9 Aggravated Theft	307
284 Chap 9 Simple theft	10
287 Chap 9 Unjustified possession of monies, articles, etc by person previously convicted	1
28B Chap 9 Commission of an offence during the operational period of suspended sentence	19
293 Chap 9 Misappropriation	3
298 Chap 9 Commercial or industrial fraud	5

298 B Chap 9 Breach of copyright	6
298D Chap 9 Tampering, removal, etc of chassis or engine number	1
309 Chap 9 Other cases of fraudulent gain	31
317 Chap 9 Arson to common danger	1
32(1) Chap 217 False declaration to the principal immigration officer	1
325 Chap 9 Spoil, damage or injury in general (wilful damage)	115
334 Chap 9 Receiving stolen property	75
334A Chap 9 Failure to inform, etc property	1
337C Chap 9 Unlawful access to data	3
337D Chap 9 Misuse of hardware	1
338 Chap 9 Contraventions affecting public order	17
339 Chap 9 Contraventions against the person	8
355AL (5) Chap 9 Breach of police bail	2
41(1) Chap 9 Attempted offence	31
41 Chap 480 Failure to inform police about a firearm	3
47 Chap 480 Custody of arms proper	1
3 Chap 480 General Prohibition	1
42 Chap 9 Accomplice in crime	8
48A Chap 9 Conspiracy	3
49 Chap 9 Recidivist	96
55 Chap 480 Possession of firearms during commission of a crime	33
5 Chap 61 Falsification of a passport	1
579(2) Chap 9 Breach of bail conditions	16
5 Chap 480 license to keep, possess, export or import firearms, weapons and ammo	10
6 Chap 480 Licence to carry knives	10
68 Chap 9 Unlawful assembly	3
7 Chap 446 Probation order	18
74 Chap 254 Postal act	17
86 Chap 9 Illegal arrest, detention or confinement	29
95 Chap 9 Vilification, threats or bodily harm against other public officers	4
96 Chap 9 Assault or resistance	4
35a Chap 399 Misuse of telecommunication apparatus	2
52 Chap 480 Carrying arms of a different kind from that specified in licence	13
MVR – Breach of motor vehicles regulations	21
LN79 2006 – Discharging a firearm in public	7
Total	1,072
Offences committed prior to 2009 but presented in court in 2009	
261 Chap 9 Aggravated theft	9
55 Chap 102 Undue influence in an election	1
325 Chap 9 Spoil, damage or injury in general (wilful damage)	4
28B Chap 9 Commission of an offence during the operational period of suspended sentence	1
49 Chap 9 Recidivist	7
161 Chap 9 Damage to Monuments	1
251A Chap 9 – Harassment	2
41 Chap 9 – Attempted crime	2
22 Chap 446 – Absolute Conditional discharge	1
Total	28

Homicide Squad

During 2009, the Homicide Squad investigated six murder cases of which three were solved and the persons allegedly involved were brought before the courts. Obviously, most of the time was afforded to the three murder cases that took place during 2008 and which are still unsolved. However, in addition to these ongoing investigations, the Squad had initiated the review of three cold murder cases which date back to the years 1977, 1997 and 2005 respectively. The review of these cases is continuously ongoing with a view to identifying and bringing those responsible to justice.

The Squad was also tasked to investigate a number of cases, mostly involving deaths, and assisted the District Police until foul play was ruled out. The cause of the latter cases resulted to be of either suicidal or accidental nature or due to natural causes.

Cultural Property Crime Unit

During the year, various types of crimes involving cultural heritage were investigated by the CID Cultural Property Crime Unit (CPCU). Crimes investigated range from crimes of theft and receiving stolen goods to fraud of works of art and vandal acts.

Theft and receiving stolen goods consisted of crimes related mostly to antique furniture, paintings, antique jewellery and other types of antiques where the unit managed to recover several stolen pieces of works of art and antiquities. Vandal acts on archaeological and historic sites and monuments were also investigated. As regards to fraud of works of art these included cases where several religious paintings covering churches and band clubs walls and ceilings were identified as being fraudulently made and sold.

Other Services offered by the Unit

In order to provide for a better understanding of the subject to other police officers and with the aim of improving their investigative skills, the unit delivered several lectures to members of the force during in-service and recruitment courses at the Police Academy.

During 2009, the contribution of the police in protecting the country's heritage was also promoted through several public talks. These talks were delivered either on the media or in other institutions such as museums and during an international workshop, with the aim of improving museum security and raising awareness in crime prevention measures.

In several other instances, assistance was also provided to the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage on inspections and reports related to breaches of the cultural heritage act.

Stolen Vehicles Squad (SVS)

During 2009, the Stolen Vehicles Squad carried out the following vehicle inspections:

- 3,954 vehicles;
- 609 second-hand imported engines;
- 958 other vehicles were inspected by SVS Technical Unit at MT Garage;
- 518 vehicles or engines were punched with new Police VIN or Engine no. stamp by the SVS Technical Unit at SVS/MT;
- SVS Technical Unit personnel inspected 2 vehicles on assistance to Customs and other Government Departments, and inspected 3 vehicles during assistance to other Police sections in other investigations, whilst the SVS Investigative Team (CID) were requested to assist divisional police and other police sections on 7 occasions;
- 5 vehicles were seized pending investigations whilst 637 vehicles and loose engines were photographed by SVS Technical Unit for investigation/record purposes;
- 407 SVS query files involving vehicle/engine discrepancies were originated by the SVS Technical Unit during the year 2009;
- SVS investigations led to the prosecution of 7 cases involving 3 persons who were charged with vehicle crime-related offences and other offences, consisting of 3 arraignments, which cases are included in the statistics presented by the Department.

Criminal Records Office (CRO)

During 2009, the CRO issued 34,885 Conduct Certificates against payment of €2.33 each. Thus the total amount of revenue collected was €81,282.05.

6,696 persons were convicted during the same year, of which 4,344 were convicted for crimes while 2,352 were convicted for contraventions. A breakdown showing the gender of persons convicted is shown hereunder:

Crimes	No.	Contraventions	No.
Males	3,536	Males	2,046
Females	366	Females	195
Male Foreigners	302	Male Foreigners	84
Female Foreigners	20	Female Foreigners	8
Males Underage	106	Males Underage	16
Females Underage	14	Females Underage	3
Males Foreigners Underage	20	Males Foreigners Underage	Nil
Females Foreigners Underage	Nil	Females Foreigners Underage	Nil

From the total number of persons convicted of crimes and contraventions, 434 were foreigners and 159 persons were under the age of 18 years.

The punishments inflicted by the Courts were as follows:

Imprisonment	462
Suspended Sentence in terms of Sec. 28A of the Criminal Code	431
Conditional Discharge in terms of Sec. 22 of Chapter 446 of the Laws of Malta	1,479
Conditional Discharged in terms of Sec. 7 of Chapter 446 of the Laws of Malta	170
Fine (<i>Multa</i>)	3,149
Fine (<i>Amenda</i>)	1,490
Prohibited from entering sport activities	10
Reprimand and Admonition (R&A)	614
Interdiction	28
Destruction	19
Forfeiture	183
Forfeiture and <i>multa</i>	Nil
Section 383 Chapter 9	202
Payment of Court expenses	135
Suspension of nautical licence	5
Suspension of Driving Licence	48
Suspension of Firearms Licence	21
Suspension of other licence	21
Community work	5

During the same year, 4,906 criminal cases were decided, of which 3,044 were dealt with summarily, whilst the remaining 1,862 cases were dealt with through compilation of evidence.

Mobile Squad

The Mobile Squad's primary function is that of providing rapid response to calls received by the GHQ control room. The Squad has always maintained a reputation of responding to calls in a very short time. On average, there are 10 Mobile Squad vehicles patrolling the Island on 24/7 basis. The Squad is equipped with a fleet of 20 Ford Focus vehicles with their distinctive police livery.

During 2009, members of the Mobile Squad managed to arrest 369 persons due to suspicious criminal activity or involvement in fights. 32 of these cases were persons caught *in flagrante*. The Mobile Squad also attended a total of 423 scuffles or fights in progress. Presently, the Squad is increasing the number of roadside static observations where the area patrol cars mount a "Stop and Observe" procedure for a short period of time normally of about 20 minutes in order for the police officers to control and observe passing drivers/vehicles. These "Stop and Observe" procedures help to increase recognition in respect of police presence in the street. During 2009, static observations amounted to more than 2,809.

During the same year, the Mobile Squad deployed more than 9,800 vehicular patrols, aimed primarily at curbing armed thefts from persons, commercial outlets and burglaries from residential areas, amongst others. As usual, patrols were intensified during Easter and the Yuletide periods. These patrols may have contributed to the reduction in crime rate over 2009; however one cannot estimate the number of crimes prevented by these patrols. The Mobile Squad also carried out 8,683 frequent patrols at several sites requiring special attention.

The Mobile Squad managed to locate eight absentees and assisted in seven cases of crimes against morals. Mobile personnel managed to locate 40 stolen vehicles and 32 wanted vehicles for further investigations. 154 escaped illegal immigrants were arrested and returned to the Immigration Branch. The Mobile Squad responded to 233 bank alarms, 18 alarms at ATMs and 11 alarms at Exchange Bureaux. It also responded to 233 alarms originating from factories and other commercial outlets and attended to 70 house burglar alarms. Squad members were also deployed to respond to seven shooting incidents.

District Police were assisted on 632 occasions, whilst the special branches including CID, Drug Squad, ECU, Vice Squad and Traffic Branch were supported on 206 events. Other public officers such as Local Wardens were assisted for 69 times.

Thefts which were in progress requiring the response by the Mobile Squad amounted to 166 cases, whilst there were 48 drug finds mostly on suspected drivers. Stolen items were recovered on 19 instances. In addition, 370 searches were carried out on the person while 239 searches were effected in motor vehicles. Searches inside residences, garages and other buildings amounted to 104 cases.

The Mobile Squad mounted 85 road checks and there were 22 instances where it was sent to intervene during incidents in which a pointed instrument was used. The Squad also assisted in 189 traffic accidents, where the breathalyser apparatus was used on 103 persons, out of which 71 drivers tested positive. Members of this Section also intervened in 25 suicides attempts. The Squad assisted in rescue operations or rendered other assistance for 117 times and administered first aid on 19 occasions. Assistance in controlling fires was given in 62 instances.

The Mobile Squad also mounted 252 escorts with the Attorney General, detainees and others. The Mobile Squad was also involved in three prostitution related cases. 38 charges/TOTs were also issued. The Mobile Squad attended 13 cases of bomb threats. 66 persons were temporarily detained and checked.

Type of Response	No.
Alarms at residences	70
Alarms at factories & retail outlets	233
Alarms at commercial banks/ATMs and other financial institutions	262
Roadside breathalyser tests	103
Interventions in drug related offences	48
Road checks	85
Interventions in cases of public order	423
Searches	713
Arrests	369
Illegal immigrants	154
Assisted in traffic accidents	189
Static observations	2,809

CID Lock-Up

The CID Lock-Up is located at the CID yard. Its primary function is that of serving as temporary housing for persons who have breached or are suspected of having infringed the laws of the State. The majority of persons detained at the Lock-Up are arrested by the investigative teams at specialised branches. However, it is also regularly used by the district police. In 2009, a total of 2,581 persons were registered at the CID Lock-Up. 1,708 of these detainees were Maltese and the remainder 873 were of foreign nationality. Out

of these detainees, 2,334 were males and 247 were females. 704 detainees were released on police bail conditions.

During the year, 2,571 persons were detained at this designated detention facility, 516 of whom were held in connection with immigration issues. The following list gives a breakdown of persons detained by district/branches:

District/Branches	No.
ECU	176
Drugs Squad	424
Vice Squad	122
CID	525
Special Branch	516
Interpol	3
ALE	27
Sirene	2
IRU	1
Prosecution Unit	1
District 1	120
District 2	46
District 3	84
District 4	110
District 5	52
District 6	58
District 6A	113
District 7	58
District 8	70
District 9	59
District 10	4
Total	2,571

INVESTIGATIVE SERVICES - DRUG SQUAD

The year 2009 has been another active year for the Police Drug Squad, with record seizures of drugs and court arraignments. The Drug Squad continued to give major attention and priority to high-profile drug trafficking, as well as to street-level drug trafficking. Drug abuse and possession, being a crime against the Laws of Malta and therefore subject to criminal prosecution, were also investigated and prosecuted in Court. These investigations also serve as a source intelligence gathering.

Particular attention was given during the last twelve months to drug interdiction at port-entry with particular attention to passengers arriving at the Malta International Airport. Inspections are carried out on a daily basis, conjointly with the Customs Enforcement Unit. The presence of Drug Squad personnel at MIA has remained a priority and inspections are carried out on selected passengers, mainly South American, West African and East European-born nationals and arriving on particular sensitive flights (mainly from Schengen countries). This measure has effectively contributed to record seizures of cocaine during the last two years.

Other minor anti-drug operations mainly targeting street level drug-pushers were also positively concluded. This level of trafficking is usually of concern to neighbours due to the fact that it is usually conspicuous and may contribute to the increase in related crime in the particular area.

Certain target-investigations were concluded favourably, through the use of special investigative techniques adopted by the police. Controlled-delivery operations as well as the use of participating-informants are more than often used to identify the traffickers involved and to broaden investigations. These investigations are typically time-consuming and risky, however aided by the know-how gained through experience; the success rate of such investigations has increased.

The table below refers to the total drug seizures recorded during the year, with an absolute record seizure of cannabis (with an increase of 1,982% over the previous year), and ecstasy (an increase of 58%). Apart from these record seizures, the availability of heroin on our streets during the period in caption has remained stable and the price particularly on street-level has remained higher than in previous years. At the last quarter of 2009, the availability of cocaine has decreased.

Total Seizures

Drug Type	Quantity
Cocaine	16 kg 005 grs
Liquid Cocaine	780 ml
Heroin	8 kgs 411 grs
Cannabis Resin	23 kgs 418 grs
Cannabis Grass	458 kgs 310 grs
Cannabis Plants	6 plants
Cannabis Seeds	8 grs
Ecstasy	21,682 tbs
Ecstasy (look-a-likes)	3,150 tbs
Amphetamine	1 gr
Methadone	490 ml

It is worth mentioning the fact that parallel investigations are being carried out in order to seize all assets from drug traffickers, including cash, immovable property and expensive vehicles.

The number of arrested individuals has remained stable during the last three years (616 in 2007, 628 in 2008 and 626 in 2009). However, there was an increase of 16% compared to 2006 (from 540 to 626). Sentences pronounced during 2009 decreased by 10% over 2008 (from 385 to 347 judgments).

Statistical Information regarding arrests, raids/searches and sentences awarded

Subject	Males	Females	Total
Arrested Persons	528	98	626
Raids/Searches			421
Sentence Awarded	316	31	347

The total numbers of court arraignments for trafficking of drugs during the year increased by 25% over 2008 and by 58 % over 2007, whereas the number of arraignments for possession of drugs has increased by 19% over 2008, and by 15% over 2007.

Arraignments of offences liable to imprisonment over 6 months

Offence	Males	Females	Total
Possession	323	63	386
Trafficking	160	11	171
Total	483	74	557

INVESTIGATIVE SERVICES (Economic Crimes and Vice Squads)

ECONOMIC CRIMES SQUAD

The Economic Crimes Squad is one of the specialised squads of the Police Force and is responsible to investigate all serious financial and fraudulent crimes, intellectual property rights' infringements and other serious crimes affecting the financial sector in any manner.

During the year under review, the Economic Crimes Squad continued with its successful investigations which frequently are of a very serious and complex nature. All of the reported cases were solved; the

others were either of a civil nature or no criminal offences were breached. As a result, a good number of suspects were brought before the law courts. The most successful investigations this year surely were cases of corruption. The fight against the circulation of counterfeit currency, particularly now that we have joined the eurozone is still ongoing as is also the curbing of intellectual property rights' infringements and the sale of contraband cigarettes and alcohol on the local market. There were also important cases which had an impact on a national level. Another phenomenon being experienced is the theft and skimming of debit and credit cards. A lot of dedication and investigative work was invested with a view to stop this new crime which is mainly being committed by foreigners.

The Economic Crimes Squad is responsible to investigate the following:

- Money Laundering
- Judicial requests for assistance from abroad regarding economic crimes
- Police requests from abroad through Interpol regarding economic crimes
- Contraband
- Breaches of the Financial Institutions Act
- Investigation of all Customs related offences
- Intellectual Property Rights violations
- General Fraud
- Misappropriation
- Extortion
- Corruption
- Usury
- Forgery of Documents
- Embezzlement
- Plastic card fraud
- Currency counterfeiting
- Computer Crime

The effort by the Economic Crimes Squad in the fight against Intellectual Property Rights infringements was, once again, intensified during 2009. This effort was again acknowledged by the representatives of the Association Against Copyright Theft (AACT) themselves. Almost 9,000 counterfeit pieces were seized by the Squad. Raids and inspections were intensified and carried out with a view to attaining better time management and results. Raids on stalls at various open markets and retail outlets, were effected and complemented by follow-up raids at private residences, where such residences were used for business purposes, namely IPR infringements carried out over the internet. The counterfeited material seized varied from audio and visual to clothing to cigarettes. The seizures made were as shown hereunder:

IPR Enforcement seizures – 1 November 2008 – 1 October 2009

Number of raids	63
Number of cases in court	17
Persons arraigned in court	21

Items Seized	Quantity
Music CDs	100
DVDs	8,419
Play station CDs	258
Clothing Accessories	46
Sunglasses	17
Others	2
Total	8,842

During 2009, the Economic Crimes Squad investigated the under-mentioned crimes:

Offences Investigated	Number of Cases
Fraud	147
Misappropriation	52
Forgery	20
Cheques Bounced	11
Cheques Stolen /Forged	9
Plastic Card Fraud	9
Intellectual Property Rights Infringements	30
Usury	6
VAT Investigations	0
Customs Investigations	11
Contraband Related	14
Computer Crime	3
Bribery (Corruption)	15
Money Laundering (FIAU)	17
Money Laundering (Police)	4
Foreign Requests for Assistance in Investigations	9
Commission Rogatories	20
Others	58
Total	435

The following table shows statistics relating to court arraignments:

Court Arraignments			
	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Total</i>
Persons Arraigned	230	40	270
Cases (Arraignments)	-	-	232
Arrested	253	68	321
Persons Interrogated	538	108	646
Persons Interviewed	323	107	430

Money Laundering Unit

The Money Laundering Unit, a small Unit within the Economic Crimes Squad, is responsible to investigate all cases of money laundering, but has to deal also with judicial requests for assistance and with other requests for assistance from foreign counterparts concerning matters related to money laundering investigations that they would be carrying out in their country. The Unit investigates all suspicious transaction reports that are referred to it by the Financial Intelligence and Analysis Unit, together with information received from other independent sources. Other investigations are initiated by the Unit itself or are referred to it from local police sources.

Money Laundering Activities

Persons charged in court	4
STRs FIAU	17
STRs Police	4
Requests for Assistance	12
Rogatory Letters	10

The aim of this small unit is the seizure of assets and to deprive the criminals from their illegally obtained cash and moveable and immovable properties.

VICE SQUAD

The Vice Squad is responsible to investigate all sexual offences, domestic violence, child abuse, child neglect, curbing of prostitution, missing persons, illegal gambling, clandestine lotto, paedophilia on the internet and trafficking in human beings amongst other criminal offences.

Priority was given to the fight against sexual exploitation and the curbing of loitering and soliciting for prostitution. Several persons were charged in court following successful raids, inspections and investigations concerning these serious offences.

As mentioned above, curbing loitering and soliciting for prostitution remained high on the Vice Squad's agenda during 2009. Special attention was given to those areas which are notorious for loitering by prostitutes. These areas included the Gzira, Msida, Marsa, Ta' Xbiex and Hal Far. As for the social aspect where the Vice Squad personnel are directly concerned, it can be said that the input in this regard has increased since the cases requiring understanding rather than an investigative role have increased. These cases cannot be measured in numbers. This work concerns mostly domestic violence issues including child abuse, child neglect or family issues.

Another issue which falls under this category is the tracing of missing persons. This issue is given a high level of importance so as to minimise the harm that the absentee might encounter during his or her misadventure, even though this takes a lot of resources considering that there are about 400 missing persons reported every year. All of these persons are interviewed with a view to establish the reasons why they would have left home. This is done so as to see how best these persons can be helped and to see what line of action is best to be taken in each individual case. Obviously this entails the involvement of other organisations that can help the persons involved in the best possible manner.

Prostitution by foreign women was also given its due attention by the Squad. In this regard, the so-called gentlemen's clubs were inspected on a very regular basis with a view to ensuring that no such activity could take place therein. Any indications that the premises are being used for the prostitution of foreign women are immediately followed up and investigated.

The Vice Squad also assisted Social Workers in the execution of Court Orders, by accompanying the latter when these authorities sought our assistance, apart from escorting women who were housed in shelter homes and required police protection due to their violent spouses or partners.

The statistical data concerning the Vice Squad activities for 2009 is as follows:

Persons Interrogated			
	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Total</i>
Persons Arraigned	154	157	311
Cases (Arraignments)	-	-	485
Arrested	109	26	135
Persons Interrogated	130	69	199
Persons Interviewed	236	425	661

Investigations	
Subject	Total
Missing Persons	39
Domestic Violence	8
Rape	17
Attempted Rape	2
Defilement of minor	33
Sexual activities with minors	1
Violent Indecent Assault	1
Child pornography	15
Pornography (Possession for circulation)	5
Loitering and soliciting for prostitution	176
Living off the earnings of prostitution	5
Compelled/induced persons of age to prostitution	1
Keeping a brothel	1
Suspected foreign prostitution	0
Illegal Arrest	1

Child Neglect	4
Bigamy	4
Breach of the Gaming Act	8
Illegal gambling	12
Slight injuries	1
Grievous injuries	1
False report/Simulation of Offence	3
Inspection at Gentleman's clubs	63
Assistance to Social Workers	2
Raids for prostitution	437
Raids/Inspections for Illegal Lotto & Gambling	251
Others	48
Total	1,527

Arraignments in Court			
Subject	Charges	Persons	Cases
Rape	8	8	8
Defilement of minor	38	29	29
Sexual activities with minors	27	2	2
Violent Indecent Assault	23	4	4
Immoral acts in public	30	2	2
Child pornography	16	12	12
Pornography (Possession for circulation)	6	5	5
Loitering and soliciting for prostitution	181	178	178
Living off the earnings of prostitution	8	4	2
Compelled/induced persons of age to prostitution	2	1	1
Keeping a brothel	4	3	3
Illegal Arrest	13	0	0
Child Neglect	2	1	1
Bigamy	1	1	1
Breach of the Gaming Act	19	19	7
Illegal gambling	10	10	10
Slight injuries	3	1	1
Offences against Police Officers	3	0	0
False report/Simulation of Offence	3	3	3
Others	88	28	28
Total	485	311	297

CRIME INTELLIGENCE ANALYSIS UNIT

The Criminal Intelligence Unit continued to gain workable status throughout 2009. The strategic and tactical reports issued to inform investigators and senior management alike gained further stability.

The process of crime monitoring schemes based on intelligible practices continues to inform the crime linkage and detection practices at various levels both nationally and internationally.

The liaison between the CIU and the various sections with the Malta Police Force, especially Special Branch, District Police, Criminal Investigations Department, International Relations Unit, has been widely extended on numerous levels. This year, exchange of information and intelligence check between the ENU and this office has increased thus becoming stronger and more resourceful. In this respect, the CIU generally proposes information in terms of intelligence, vetting and other various security checks.

As in previous years, the CIU has become the centre point for the Police to disseminate and alert national and international bodies on new synthetic or psychoactive drugs detected in Malta. This function is part and parcel of the Early Warning System Network established in 2004.

The unit managed to identify and apprehend foreigners who were absconding on these Islands. The unit also participated in gathering information relating to homicides, thefts, hold-ups, drug trafficking and other serious crimes. A number of covert operations were performed by the CIU ending in a number of successes.

Generally the benchmarks set each year are almost reached. As a result, new requirements are regularly identified which propel to improve our services to assist the increasing challenges faced by law enforcement agencies and the community at large.

The CIU embarked on a massive project. All district bail books were entered into one CIU database using the excel system. This indicates the name, surname, identity card number, district signing at and the criminal's address including the criminal's contact number for ease of reference. This will facilitate the retrieving of data when so requested about any criminal signing in one of the police stations round the island.

Meetings/Seminars

- On 20 and 24 July, a seminar was held at the Hilton by the US Embassy on Advanced Undercover Export Investigations Seminar. Instructors from the Department of Home and Security managed the course.
- On 3 August, a meeting was held at the CIU Office between the CIU and an Assistant Legal Attaché at the American Embassy in Rome. The meeting was very positive and dealt with sharing of information and establishing new contacts on intelligence gathering.
- On 7 August, a delegation from the Palestinian Police led held a meeting with the CIU on Intelligence matters and collaboration between the two police forces. Meeting was held at the CIU Office and new contacts were established.

Travelling Abroad

- Conference at Iceland held on 11-15 October regarding the OCTA and ECIN – Strategic Planning in the Fights against Organised Crime.
- Conference held at Vilnius Lithuania on 26-30 October about Crime Intelligence, Risk Assessment and Intelligence Led Policing.

Breakdown of Intelligence/Operations by District

Intelligence/Operations by District	
1PD	16
2PD	24
3PD	16
4PD	12
5PD	5
6PD	8
6APD	7
7PD	14
8PD	6
9PD	22
10PD	1

The table above indicates the amount of intelligence gathered by the unit per district. Qormi, Żebbug, Siggiewi, Mqabba, Qrendi, Safi, Kirkop, B'Buġa, Żurrieq and M'Xlokk, being the highest of all the districts. This is due to the fact that they are densely populated. The second district is the 9PD being composed of Mosta, Buġibba, Mgarr, Mellieħa. This District depends also on the fact that during winter time, Buġibba is almost deserted by the Maltese but on the increase by foreigners, especially from North African Countries and Asians.

Throughout this year the Ballistics Unit has proved to be an asset in a number of criminal investigations and is reaping the benefit from state of the art equipment which had been specifically acquired for this unit.

Photography Section

This section processes films, prints photographs, carries out photographic and video surveillance during sporting activities, feasts and other public activities, and photographs latent fingerprints previously recovered from scenes of crime during magisterial inquiries and other police investigations. The FSL is currently enjoying a new digital systems is complimented by new secured standards of storage, processing and printing of photos. Moreover this unit is also seeking to purchase new advanced digital SLR cameras to obtain better photo quality.

During this period, this section was called upon to perform the following work:

Printing of photographs	95,859
Photographic reproductions (black and white)	3,111
Video surveillance during sporting activities	88
Video surveillance during sporting activities	88
Photographic surveillance during other activities	40
Video surveillance during other activities	40
Video & Photo coverage at other police commitments	114
Enhancement regarding surveillance footage	465
Other misc. work carried out at video section for other units e.g. SVS, MT Garage, Vice Squad, SB, CIAU, TU and others	145

Image and Video Enhancement

This is a sub-unit of the photographic unit. As in previous years, the FSL has invested both in equipment and training. Following an evaluation of the computerised systems that were available on the market, the FSL has yet again invested in state of the art equipment for this specific purpose and now provides another essential tool for criminal investigations.

Both the investment in training and equipment has proved an asset in many criminal investigations. The results obtained have so far been widely accepted in criminal proceedings and as a result of this success we are experiencing an increased demand for these analytical services. During this year this section has worked on 465 cases with a very high success rate.

Fingerprint Section

This section is responsible to take fingerprint and palm print impressions of suspects, tenants (for elimination purposes) and all illegal immigrants and for their input into the Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS). Latents recovered from the scene of the crime are inputted into the AFIS system and compared with the suspects' database. The outcome is then reported to different agencies that will be investigating the matter including the Attorney General, Court of Magistrates, Interpol, Europol, Immigration, CID, Economic Crime, Drug Squad and District Police. This section has once again been successful with 101 hits resulting from searches performed on the AFIS (hits are positively compared latent fingerprints which are recovered from the scene of a crime with suspects housed in the database). Numerous other hits resulted from elimination comparisons with tenants.

The Fingerprint Section has in all processed 38,501 transactions ranging from introducing new records, scanning, and searching, updating and verifying results on the AFIS.

This unit has successfully resolved 46 crimes, took impressions of 1,475 illegal immigrants, scanned, checked and processed 390 ten-prints of suspects and 116 of pyrotechnics enthusiasts (licensed applicants), processed also 1,086 latents recovered by scene of crime officers from 1,743 scenes of crime. A total of

2,074 latents were searched against the suspects' database. 116 vehicles were examined mainly after being reported to have been targeted for theft. This figure does not include other vehicles examined by scene of crime officers that may be related to more serious crime cases.

Moreover, this unit assisted other sections within the Police Force including IP, ECU and SIS where 190 reports were processed holding a total of 353 latents being inputted in the AFIS system.

Fingerprint Chemical Enhancement Unit

This section carries out chemical examinations to enhance fingerprints, palm prints and shoe marks, and the identification of blood and other body fluids from items recovered from the scene of the crime.

The items and exhibits submitted to this Unit were all examined using various chemical techniques involving a whole list of chemicals. Once fingerprints or other relevant marks are developed, these were photographed using cold light resources and the Quasar2000. Body fluids and blood enhancement techniques involve examinations with LMG and hydrogen peroxide and Obti Tests.

A total of 201 cases were examined at this Unit. These included items handed over by scene of the crime officers, CID and Drug Squad detectives, AFIS officers, divisional police inspectors and through court appointments. There were 36 cases of anonymous letters submitted to this end for fingerprint analysis. The unit officers were appointed by the Courts on 88 cases.

The documents examined by this unit includes:

Paper documents	2,078
Plastic including selotape, bags, wrappers etc	2,714
Metal including firearms, foil etc	84
Glass/material	8
Vehicles	6

Scene of Crime Unit

The scene of crime unit is called upon reported crime. Their main duty is to preserve the scene of the crime; however they assess the scene of the crime, evaluate the evidence recovered, preserve same evidence and then submit to the respective other experts for the necessary examinations or directly submitted to the Courts. With every assignment, they also prepare a detailed report of their findings. The amount of work performed by this section is voluminous and very difficult to quantify. Members within this section have attended on 2,035 court appointed cases and 54 jury cases as court experts during the period in question apart from 769 police work cases.

The range of cases included 25 vandalism cases, 15 grievous injuries/loss of life cases, 6 rapes, 121 cases of illicit substance abuse including trafficking and possession, 8 overdoses cases, 41 armed robberies, 53 fatal/ traffic accidents, 75 sudden deaths, 13 accidental falls cases, 8 explosions, 11 identification parades, 112 fire/arson cases, 682 thefts from residences or other commercial premises, 4 homicides, 23 attempted/suicide cases, 4 recoveries of diseased bodies, 57 recoveries of vehicle, 15 damages on property, 15 stabbing incidents, 18 cases of recovery of items, 13 shooting incidents and 250 fingerprints examinations on stolen vehicles.

Restoration of Obliterated Serial Numbers

Two scene of crime officers are currently also performing restoration examinations on firearms, vehicle engines and chassis numbers. During this period these officers were involved in 18 investigations and so far outstanding results have been obtained.

National Document Examination Unit

The National Document Examination Unit (NDEU) has been operating for nearly seven years and its main objectives are focused on the forensic side of the questioned documents. The Unit is engaged in carrying out daily related police work and court appointments.

This Unit has been requested to assist various specialised police branches such as the CID, Drug Squad, ECU, SB and other units within the Police Corps. Obviously considering the nature of work entails, it holds a 3rd security level in security document examinations and liaises with foreign authorities engaged in the border control measures, printing and distributing of classified alerts and bulletins. Other duties of this Unit include providing training and maintaining a memorandum of understanding with Immigration personnel and other local and foreign entities such as MIA, Central Bank of Malta, De La Rue and diplomatic officers.

Moreover, personnel within this Unit have undergone advanced expert courses in the Netherlands where the result obtained was superb and highly above average. Complementing their training, a new apparatus the VSC6000 was introduced, which is the only equipment of its sort supplied to other police corps in Europe.

The NDEU conducted 147 questioned documents including 1 counterfeit Maltese birth certificate, 2 forged identity cards, 8 forged passports, 18 counterfeit passports and 20 counterfeit identity cards, 3 stolen blank cheques, 18 counterfeit visa documents, 4 imposter passports, 22 counterfeit residence permits, 1 fantasy document, 50 anonymous letters and processed 141 specimen documents in the NDEU document library for comparison and training purposes and 156 alerts and bulletins which were brought to the attention to all immigration personnel.

This Unit also operates the False and Authentic Documents On-line (FADO) system. This system, which became operational in December 2004, is linked to a highly secured network connectivity that shares information with all EU Member States. An ad hoc FADO user working group has been established to operate under the Council of the European Union as part of the Frontiers/ False Documents Working Party Mixed Committee.

The Director of the FSL has actively assisted the ECU in 14 investigations concerning handwriting examinations as well as document examinations and has also given evidence in Court as part of the Police Investigations.

Forensic Registry

The Forensic Registry is responsible for back office operations of the FSL. Duties include the monitoring of file movements, opening and closing of files, court diaries and appointments and other related office duties. These officers perform standby duties in order to provide services related to the production of composite facial images through the use of computer aided software combined with specialised cognitive interviewing technique. They also provide photographic services in investigations related to sexual offences where female victims are involved.

EFIT

The Forensic Registry personnel perform e-fit production. Throughout 2009 they were engaged in the production of 38 e-fits, 19 of which involving male subjects.

PROTECTIVE SERVICES

TRAFFIC BRANCH

The Traffic Branch focused mainly on reducing traffic accidents, improving the flow of traffic and assisting drivers, pedestrians and other road users alike. Traffic personnel devoted most of their time to proactive policing with a mixture of reactive policing.

Traffic motorcyclists made their presence seen and felt particularly throughout the rush hours both in the morning and the afternoons. Additionally, they were regularly deployed at strategic spots frequently used by motorists. They were also utilised along main and arterial roads where works were being carried out. The objectives were twofold; maintaining the free flow of traffic particularly where deviations were necessary and to curb and control abuses by drivers. They also focused on reducing traffic accidents especially around known black spots.

Four main issues dealt with and heavily focused on were (a) drink driving, (b) driving without seat belt, (c) driving and using mobile sets, and (d) crossing on red lights.

During spot checks carried out by the Traffic Branch, 27,515 drivers were stopped and charges were issued where necessary. As distinct from normal road checks, specific spot checks were also carried out with the aim of enforcing seatbelts regulations, driving with mobile phones, excessive speed and drink and drive regulations.

Other involvement was also attributed in the look-out for criminals who were either wanted by the section or other sections within the Force. There were a few occasions where vehicles that had been reported stolen were recovered by personnel from the Traffic Branch. In other instances, officers from this section were also successful when assisting other units during hold-ups, or recovering stolen items following snatch and grabs.

The total number of charges and Traffic Offences Tickets (TOTs) issued by the Traffic Branch is indicated below. Those charges which could not be otherwise included in the TOTs have had to be issued separately.

Number of drivers stopped	27,515
Charges Issued	547
Traffic Offence Tickets (TOTs) Issued	29,961

Personnel from this Branch were also responsible for providing police escorts with internationally renowned political dignitaries visiting Malta on official functions. There were 39 occasions, involving about 466 traffic motorcyclists, in which traffic personnel contributed during the year.

Similar escort duties were provided with the President of Malta as well as with the Prime Minister and in some instances with some Ministers, the Attorney General and the Chief Justice. Such escorts were carried out on 214 occasions with around 552 members in participation.

Traffic motorcyclists also contributed during sports events, in particular bicycle and athletic events, by assisting participants during the competitions. Likewise their contribution was also evident during the summer patrols carried out in various localities.

Traffic motor cyclists were continuously involved in delivering public talks to local councils, government and private schools. The Traffic Safety Campaign was given regular public awareness through continuous participation on the local media, both on TV and radio stations. The Traffic School Campaign was also continued during the year with eight campaigns and a total of 2,870 students in participation.

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW ENFORCEMENT UNIT (ALE)

The Administrative Law Enforcement Unit continued with its efforts to safeguard our environment. During the year in question 2,148 individuals were booked. The major emphasis this year was smoking in public places and offences against the Litter Act while every effort was put in place to continue to monitor the countryside from illegal hunting/trapping activities. The latter this year had a new facet since trapping for song birds was prohibited throughout the year.

As in previous years, the Administrative Law Enforcement Section continued to collaborate with other entities outside the Force and in 2009 bridges were built with the Fisheries Department with a view to holding closer collaboration in 2010.

Lectures on maritime issues were given to all ALE staff in conjunction with the Transport Authority personnel before the summer period and thus all those involved in sea patrol duties had a better understanding of their roles at sea.

Officers from this section assisted also other units within the Force during lean periods. These included the Mobile Squad and Traffic Branch. Officers on bikes were in 2009 not only deployed on beach patrols but also assisted in traffic management during the *l-Istrina* Presidential marathon.

Nature of Charge	No
Illegal Bird Tapping	172
Illegal Hunting on land	117
Illegal Hunting at sea	13
In possession of protective species	22
Illegal selling of birds	3
Litter Act	71
Dumping	4
Infringements of the MMA Regulations	166
Traffic Offences Tickets/Traffic Chargers	108
Smoking in public places	1,358
Arms Act	26
Illegal cutting to Protected trees	6
Others	82
Total	2,148

Court Cases	
VAT Sittings	55
VAT New cases	2,318
VAT decided cases	645
ECO Tax Sittings	3
ECO Tax new cases	110
ECO Tax cases decided	4
ALE Sittings	12
ALE new cases	535
ALE cases decided	345
Total	4,027

Seizures	
Protective Species seized	162
Weapons seized	53
Cartridges seized	2,180
Total	2,395

COMMAND AND CONTROL ROOM

Emergency Line 112	2008	2009
Total number of calls answered	475,556	454,201
Total number of calls unanswered	159,347	159,539
Total number of calls transferred to various government emergency entities	65,577	84,639

Total number of calls transferred to various police stations	38,170	44,265
Total number of calls transferred to CPD	6,085	8,336
Total number of calls transferred to AFM	477	433
Total number of calls transferred to Mater Dei Hospital	18,370	27,897
Total number of calls transferred to Gozo Police	1,234	3,174
Total number of calls transferred to Gozo Health Section	341	534

The table above indicates the number of telephone calls answered and/or transferred to various government entities (with the exception of the months April to June, when the system was un-functional) as well as various stations and branches within the Police Department.

PRINCIPAL CITATIONS OFFICE

This Office was responsible to issue a large number of subpoenas, not only in connection and directly connected to police work, but also for many other government departments. During 2009, this Office prepared paper work for the following court sittings:

Nature of Sitting	No of sittings appointed	Cases appointed	Cases put off	Cases decided
Traffic	61	2,847	1,711	1,136
Collisions	49	1,135	781	354
Health	41	1,589	1,397	192
DIER	20	415	322	93
Health & Safety	8	186	91	95
Appeals Court	98	1,124	682	442
Appeals Traffic	8	316	228	88
Juvenile	8	122	58	64
ETC	23	678	360	318
Evasion of duty	13	254	243	11
Family Court	46	2,565	1,182	1,383
National Employment Authority	2	2	1	1
Total	377	11,233	7,056	4,177

CENTRAL DELIVERY OFFICE (CDO)

This Office handled quite a substantial number of citations, subpoenas and other court-related papers as clearly illustrated in the following table:

Incoming papers	Outgoing papers	Undelivered	Working days	Percentage of deliverable/undeliverable
91,588	87,181	13,532	250	14.77%

SPECIAL ASSIGNMENTS GROUP (SAG)

The Special Assignments Group were tasked various duties. These duties, shown in the chart below, vary from Fixed Point Guard Duties and Patrolling to Anti-Riot/Crowd Control situations, Close Security Protection and Special Weapons and Tactics Scenarios.

There were 16 instances where the SAG were called in on Anti-Riot/Crowd Control situations. A further 12 occasions necessitated the need for Special Weapons and Tactics to be utilised.

Every time a dignitary visits Malta it is the task of the SAG to provide Close Security Protection with these VIPs. In 2009 alone there were 102 occasions where such service was rendered.

Furthermore, the SAG are called to escort other persons who themselves may be of a threat to society. For the past year, these consisted mainly of persons who had to be escorted abroad to or recalled back from other countries. A total of 17 escorts of the sort were carried out.

There were 20 occasions throughout the year when the SAG were tasked with providing armed escorts when transporting valuables. To add to this, on 72 instances the SAG gave protection to venues where these valuables were held. Depending on the circumstances, these duties were performed either in plain clothes or in uniform.

Another duty delegated to the SAG is the Guarding of visiting warships/shore patrol. This service is normally requested by battleships of the American and British naval fleets entering Malta. In 2009, this service was rendered 12 times.

The SAG deployed its members almost on a daily basis to guard the United States of America embassy at Floriana and the British High Commission at Ta' Xbiex. These duties totalled 748 times in a year.

Due to international circumstances arising at the time, in November and December, 56 patrols were carried out in the area of the Egyptian Embassy and residence at Ta' Xbiex and Kappara respectively.

Further patrols are performed at Paceville during the weekends and on public holidays in order to assist the District Police. Last year these patrols amounted to 188. There are also other instances where SAG patrols are requested for a particular event such as when high level meetings are held. There were 146 patrols of this sort.

The SAG are often called to assist various other branches, sections and districts within the Police Force. During the past year assistance was given 16 times to the Criminal Investigating Department (CID), the Special Branch (SB), the Administrative Law Enforcement Section (ALE), the Drugs Squad and Economic Crime Section.

A total of 20 courses and training sessions were held in-house by the staff of the Italian Military Mission in Malta and visiting USA Naval Counter Intelligence Service personnel. Subjects covered were Abseiling, Anti Riot, Basic & Advanced Shooting, Close Protection Training, Close Quarter Combat and Unarmed Combat.

There were 10 instances where the SAG provided a reliever NCO to perform supervision duties at the Ta' Kandia Detention Centre.

During their course of work, the SAG issued 17 charges in relation infringement of the law. The following list is a compilation of the duties performed by the Special Assignments Group as explained above:

S.G Duties 2009	Number of Duties Performed
Anti-Riot/Crowd Control Situations	16
Close Security Protection (Dignitary Protection)	200
Fixed Point Duties (United States of America Embassy & British High Commission)	748
Duty at Ta' Kandia Detention Center (NCO Reliever)	10
Escorting Persons Overseas	17
Patrol with Egyptian Embassy and Residence	56
Patrols in Paceville (On Weekends)	188
Other Patrols	146
SWAT Assistance	12
Assistance to Branches/Sections/Districts	16
Escort Duties with Valuables	20
Guarding of Warships/Shore Patrol	12
Plain Clothes/ Uniformed Protection of Venues	72
Courses in Abseiling, Anti Riot, Basic & Advanced Shooting, Close Protection Training; Close Quarter Combat	20
Charges Issued	17
Total	1,432

DOGS SECTION

The functions of the Dogs Section handlers and their dogs may be classified in three categories: Protection duty, Narcotics duty, and Explosives duty. In 2009 the handlers together with their dogs performed over 2,000 duties in these categories.

The procurement of six dogs from the United Kingdom was concluded and were planned to be handed over to this Section in January 2010. This acquisition is in line with 3-month training courses planned for personnel at the Dogs Section in 2010. The training will be delivered by a visiting foreign instructor, as part of the package.

During 2009, the Protection duty dogs were tasked to perform patrol duties 232 times at Paceville during weekends. Also they carried out 785 patrols at areas considered of high importance, at the Ta' Xbiex Yacht Marina and also beach patrols.

As part of the security measures taken at the Malta International Airport, the Narcotics and the Explosives duty dogs executed 473 searches throughout the year.

The Explosives duty dogs were requested by EOD AFM to carry out searches at venues of high importance such as part of foreign dignitary visits to Malta. In total, the Explosives duty dogs assisted the AFM on 102 occasions.

In 2009 the Dogs Section handlers were called on 210 occasions for reinforcement duties in connection with local or national commitments.

Also the Section performed a total of 481 fixed point duties at places of special concern. Members of this section were occasionally deployed to guard the Police Detention Centres.

Furthermore, the Dogs Section took part in 255 displays performed to numerous schools and local councils. These include several visits to the Dogs Section by groups of schoolchildren and other displays held by the Malta Police Force.

There were 58 occasions where personnel from the Dogs Section who are also musicians were called to execute duties with the Police Band.

MOUNTED SECTION

Following the procurement of six horses from France, this Section has benefited from such addition and trained these horses for Police use during the year under review.

The duties of Mounted Section are classified in two types - ceremonial and policing. In 2009 the Mounted Section performed 64 Presidential escorts. These ceremonial type escorts are done whenever a Head of State visits Malta and there is the need for the Cavalry to accompany the dignitary in and out of the capital city.

There were also other 44 Ceremonial activities where the Mounted Section escorts ambassadors to the President's Palace for their appointment to office or on their last day in office.

Other ceremonial duties that the Mounted Section was tasked with during the past year include 94 Gala duties where the riders alone stood guard in their ceremonial dress at various occasions.

Moreover, the Mounted Section took part in 42 displays performed to numerous entities. These include displays held by the Malta Police Force.

With regard to policing duties, during 2009 the Mounted Police were called 220 times at the Marsa Race Track in connection with the horse racing held thereat. Furthermore, the Mounted Section housed the anti-doping tests that were held on the race horses participating in the same races.

Another activity in which the Mounted Section contributed was the policing at football games held at Ta' Qali National Football Stadium. The members of the Mounted Section were called 68 times during the year to assist in crowd control.

The Mounted Section was also deployed to patrol certain areas of importance. Throughout the year, 270 patrols were performed. These included instances where the Mounted Section proceeded to Gozo to patrol the major roads of Rabat.

Also, in the summer months, there were 38 instances when patrol was carried out on horseback. On particular occasions, the Mounted Section personnel were also detailed to perform foot patrol at the major beaches. A total of 354 foot patrols were carried out.

Finally, the Mounted Section were called 55 times for reinforcement duties.

MOTOR VEHICLE TRANSPORT SECTION (MT)

The Motor Vehicle Transport Section, commonly referred to as the MT Floriana, is designated to provide vehicular transport to the Police Department and to maintain same in the best condition as possible. This section also provides technical back-up to branches and districts during investigations involving motor vehicles. The MT is comprised of two sections, the Drivers' Section and the MT Garage Workshop (Mechanics) Section.

The **Drivers Section** is responsible for the transport of all officers stationed at the GHQ. This section also caters for the transport of vehicles under investigations, derelict vehicles and stranded police vehicles, and provides bus transport for police needs, ranging from police reinforcements to the transportation of clandestine immigrants. The section also caters for the distribution of police-barriers and the conveyance of corpses undergoing magisterial enquiries.

The Police Fuel Pump caters only for service vehicles and cars hired by special branches. The St Andrew's Police Compound houses vehicles under investigations both by the Police and by the duty magistrates.

The **MT Garage Section** is composed of the Workshop section and the MT Stores section, which is responsible for the procurement and issue of vehicle spare parts. This section is responsible for maintaining and servicing the police vehicle fleet as well as second-hand vehicles acquired from other departments. Services carried out at the MT Workshop section are automotive/motorcycle repairs, auto-electrical, vulcanizing, panel beating and spray painting.

Six new motor-cycles and 11 motor scooters were procured for the Central Delivery Office, while nine used vehicles were acquired from various government departments. In addition, 19 second-hand vehicles were purchased and imported from the UK in 2009.

During the year, the MT Section handled 3,400 job cards for repair works on police vehicles. These varied from routine maintenance, to major engine or body repairs. The amount of €338,534 was spent on the purchase of both proprietary and non-proprietary parts, and for other services. During the same period, the fuel consumption for the Police Department amounted to €660,511.

SPECIAL BRANCH

IMMIGRATION

The main task of the Immigration Branch is to control the island's points of entry, which include checks to prevent illegal entry of foreigners and detection of forged documents. It has entry points at the Airport, Seaport and Yacht Marina as well as a seasonal port at Mġarr, Gozo. Police and civilian personnel man the entry point at the airport. Police officers carry out border control at the other points of entry.

During the period under review, the number of persons who arrived in or left Malta by air, was as follows:

Arrivals:	1,458,299
Departures:	1,463,249
Transit:	2,921,548

Source: *Malta International Airport*

The number of ferry passengers, excluding cruise liner passengers, processed at the seaport was:

Arrivals:	93,858
Departures:	92,723

The Sea Passenger Terminal also saw to the arrival and departures of the following numbers of cruise liner passengers:

Arrivals:	14,230
Departures:	14,092
Transit:	413,589

Source: *Malta Maritime Authority*

The visa-on-line system requires the daily input of the Immigration Police in order to assure the proper processing of applicants for uniform visas in line with EU Regulations. This Branch also houses an ad hoc office that deals with visa issues and it can be reported that the process is very fast and smooth.

Another office is responsible for matters relating to foreigners' administrative issues, and includes the processing of requests for Acquisition of Immovable property, extensions of stay, residence permits, nationality requests, and work permits. 139 foreigners who did not satisfy the conditions for entry were refused entry into the island, an activity aimed at suppressing illegal immigration.

Immigration Field Duties

Insofar as field duties are concerned, 1,688 removal orders were issued by the Immigration officers. These include removal orders issued in respect of foreigners arriving in Malta or intercepted on boats. Immigration officers deployed on field duties also had to cater for the 17 boats which were rescued or entered Maltese waters illegally. The boats carried a total of 1,475 migrants. These all had to be medically checked, photographed, fingerprinted and accommodated. They were also interviewed in order to establish their identity and wherever possible effect repatriations.

Coordination with the Office for the Welfare and Integration of Asylum Seekers (OIWAS) is required and kept constant, due to the arrivals of family units and minors who are only kept in detention for the minimum period necessary to have them cleared medically. Dubious cases of minors are also referred for further age examination and the results of these are communicated to MFSS.

A number of the above opted to apply for refugee status locally and all relative documentation that was referred to the migrants from the Refugee Commission, relating to the approval or rejection of their claim was delivered by Immigration personnel. The same applies to correspondence exchanged with the Refugee

Appeals Board. All communications from REFCOM and the Appeals Board that are addressed to the immigrants are also distributed by this Section.

The Immigration Field Officers delivered to migrants in custody over 1,000 notifications, frequently with great difficulty, especially in the case of rejections.

In the field of repatriation, a total of 367 foreigners were repatriated in line with immigration procedures. Also in this aspect, the Police were responsible to acquire the relative documentation and return tickets in order to secure smooth repatriations. Requests for documents continued to be forwarded to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in an effort to be in a position to repatriate failed asylum seekers. In a number of cases action was also taken to organise repatriation procedures with accompanying escorts. During 2009, a charter flight to Ghana was organised. This section constantly monitored all joint repatriation flights organised by EU and Frontex with a view to participate in those which were valid for Malta.

During the same year, this section was heavily deployed with activities relating to the Frontex Project Nautilus IV. In addition to their duties, officers posted at Immigration had to be actively involved in coordinating with Frontex offices that were part of the project in Malta, between May and October. This drastically increased the burden of the work of the section.

The Police Immigration Section has very close and strong liaison with the Maritime Unit and other sections of the Armed Forces of Malta, which patrol the blue border. Immigration gazetted officers actively participated in a number of meetings, seminar, working groups and other activities, held both at EU level and by Frontex.

Eurodac Office

The Immigration Police are also responsible for the running of the Eurodac Office. As such, they are responsible to store and disseminate fingerprints of all asylum seekers and illegal immigrants to the central data bank which is shared by all EU states. The same office is also responsible for the responses to requests to check or take back immigrants who may be discovered in other EU Member States or vice versa. This Office received a number of such requests and these are being processed regularly.

Very close relation is kept with the Refugee Commissioner who is technically responsible for the Dublin activities. All action is being taken to ensure that from our end, all data is entered in good time in the Eurodac system. The officers posted there have also gained very good experience of the way the office operates and the procedures required. During the period under review, a total of 971 new requests were filed to this office and 471 migrants were accepted and sent back to Malta following the required checks and verifications.

Duties at Open and Closed Accommodation Centres

Figures of foreigners in custody differ from one day to the other; however up to the end of year under review, there were 46 foreigners housed at the Ta' Kandja reception centre, 258 housed at Safi Barracks and 14 housed at Lyster Barracks. This amounts to a total of 318 immigrants. Those housed at Safi, Lyster Barracks and at the new premises at SAG are under the supervision of the Armed Forces of Malta, which greatly assists the Immigration Police in the housing of foreigners who had entered Malta by boat or had been rescued by their Maritime Unit.

Immigration Police presence is also secured at the Open Centre run by the Immigrants Commission at Balzan. This activity generated massive duties during the same year, especially insofar as escort duties and other related activities are concerned.

This Section is also responsible to ensure that all immigrants are released from custody according to government policy. During the period under study, 2,255 immigrants were brought over to GHQ to be

released. This obviously entails a lot of administrative duties including issuing them with an Immigration document for identification purposes.

Private Guards and Local Wardens

Another duty entrusted to the Special Branch is the processing of applications and licensing of applicants for the position of Private Guard or Local Wardens and for the registration and licensing of the agencies which employ these guards and wardens. The following applications were received and processed 2009:

Type	Applications				Licences
	<i>Received</i>	<i>Refused</i>	<i>Withdrawn</i>	<i>Pending</i>	<i>Issued</i>
Private Guards	682	11	Nil	102	569
Local Wardens	30	2	Nil	Nil	28
Private Guard Agencies	2	Nil		1	1
Local Warden Agencies	1	Nil		Nil	1

WEAPONS AND EXPLOSIVES

The Special Branch also caters for issues relating to weapons and explosives. Insofar as weapons are concerned, it is responsible for approving import of weapons and authorising temporary approvals for import/export of weapons for sporting purposes. In view of this activity, action was also taken to comply with EU requirements for the movement of firearms which requirements are also embodied in domestic laws. The Special Branch is the designated contact point with other European Police services dealing with the movement of weapons.

During the period under review, weapons licences were processed from the different district offices which have access to a main weapons data base. The system is enhanced continuously to meet the requirements of the Police Department.

The Weapons Office is also responsible to ensure that correct amounts of explosive materials are used at hard-stone quarries. To ensure that this activity is well carried out, regular consultation is kept with the Malta Environment and Planning Authority. Officers from this department are present during all blasting operations, and in construction projects requiring the blasting of rocks. These officers are responsible to escort and control the issue and use of explosives when such operations take place.

The Explosives Committee, which includes a member from the Police Force also met on several occasions to deal with issues of fireworks and blasting operations during the same period.

Weekly inspections at fireworks factories are organised, whenever possible, in order to ensure that persons on sites of fireworks factories are duly licensed by the Police according to law. These inspections are also carried out by officers posted at the immigration Branch.

PROTECTIVE SERVICE PLANNING AND COORDINATION

The Special Branch is also the designated body to coordinate protective measures of visiting VIPs and to organise security during certain conferences and other meetings. For this purpose, close liaison is ensured with the District Police, the Traffic Branch and the Special Assignment Group.

As in former years, during 2009, various VIPs travelled to Malta. Every time, action was taken by this Branch to ensure that through a combination of measures and capabilities, appropriate steps were taken to protect such visitors. Action had in all cases been taken to have a proper security and risk assessment and inspections on sites to be visited for such purpose were ensured. Close liaison was also kept with other appropriate departments to secure the success of these visits, and these included the MFA, OPM, AFM, Health, MIA and OMAS.

Protective duties are also carried out by officers within the Branch with certain local VIPs as and whenever required.

AIRPORT POLICE STATION

The Special Branch is also responsible for the public areas at the Malta International Airport. It is also responsible for all investigations of incidents reported within the airport area. Such duties are directed by the Officer in charge of the Airport Police Station.

Duties at the station concern normal public order duties, prevention of crime and investigation of offences. For this purpose, several inspections and various road blocks were organised. The airport police are also responsible for the running of the custody centre at the MIA.

Various offences relating to traffic contraventions were dealt with and regular patrol is secured at the airport. A number of traffic offence tickets were issued by the airport police.

The officers at the airport are also deployed on duties where special skills are needed to cover protective security measures during the use of the airport by distinctive visitors leaving or arriving in Malta. The following are the figures of activities carried out by the Malta International Airport Police Station during 2009:

MIA Police Station Activities - 2009		
		Total
Traffic offence tickets		363
False documents detected at MIA and Seaport		
<i>Visas/stamps</i>	38	
<i>Passports</i>	34	
<i>Others</i>	62	134
Inspections/roadblocks at MIA		
<i>Inspections</i>	364	
<i>Roadblocks</i>	109	473
Inspections carried out at Gates		831
Damaged/stolen mail reported at MIA		29
Escorts of valuable cargo		341

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS UNIT

The International Relations Unit (IRU) within the Malta Police is part of the Special Branch. The functions of the IRU are to coordinate cooperation with international law enforcement agencies in particular in the field of criminal matters. Cooperation is handled through three channels, namely Interpol, Europol and the Sirene Office. The operations of these units are described below.

Officers from the IRU represent the Police Force in the Council Ad Hoc Working Group on Information Exchange. A Superintendent attached to the Unit acts as the National Liaison Officer at Europol Headquarters at the Hague.

Europol National Unit

Cooperation with other Europol Member States continued to increase during 2009. In May, Europol held their first ever HENU Meeting in Malta. This meeting was held locally in view of the HENU chairmanship by the Maltese Liaison Officer in The Hague, which ended in June 2009. Our European Liaison Officer also attended various seminars and meetings organised by Europol and other EU agencies.

Communication equipment dedicated to the exchange of information with Europol was upgraded and action is being taken to enhance the administrative capacity of this office. The Malta Police Force is now

responsible for the procurement, maintenance and security of equipment installed at the national unit. These changes make it possible for Europol applications to be extended to those specialised branches with which there is special liaison and which participate in Analytical Work Files (AWFs) namely the Counter-Terrorism Unit, the CID, the Drugs Squad, the Economic Crimes Squad, the Vice Squad, the Immigration Section and the Cyber Crime Unit.

During the year, 45 incoming requests for mutual assistance in criminal matters were coordinated by officers from this Office and executed by or with the assistance of officers from other specialised branches of the Police with whom very close liaison and cooperation exist. The requests related to various serious crimes and included the delivery of judicial documents. This Office also assisted other units with the compilation of outgoing requests for mutual assistance in criminal matters especially in the area of fraud over the internet.

During the same period, the Europol National Unit processed circa 900 new Europol case files. An officer from the Europol National Unit attended also the SIENA Train the Trainer Seminar, held at Europol HQ, The Hague.

SIReNE Office

During 2009, the number of officers deployed at SIReNE Office (Supplementary Information Request at the National Entries) was maintained at its envisaged full capacity. As in the former year, study visits have been organised to other SIRENE offices in Europe whilst a number of officers have attended meetings, common training and seminars related to their duties.

SIReNE staff has continued to support District personnel with problems they encounter while entering reports and hits on alerts in the SIS.

The SIReNE Office participates in the Council SIS/SIRENE Working Party/Mixed Committee as well as the Commission SISVIS Committee (SIReNE formation). The Unit also attended a SIReNE Task Force Meeting and a special JHA Counsellors Meeting that was held in May 2009.

In October 2009, a SIReNE Officer participated in the Basic SIReNE Operators' Seminar organised by CEPOL at the ENSP in Lyon, France.

During November 2009, the SIReNE Office completed the 2006 Transition Facility Twinning Light Project with Italy aimed at preparing the Malta Police Force, especially the Immigration Section, the IRU and the IT Services for the entry in force of the second generation of the Schengen Information System and obligations emanating from the SIS II Decision and Regulations.

The SIReNE office has continued contributing to the preparations for the entry in force of the SIS II and the consequent migration from SISone4ALL with regular reviewing of SIS data cleansing and mapping.

As regards requests for extradition received via the SIS, the SIReNE Office coordinated the arrest and surrender of three wanted persons. These persons have been surrendered to Poland, The Netherlands and Belgium. The Office also assisted the NCB with the execution of extradition cases to the UK.

The SIReNE Office also carries out checks in respect of newly registered motor vehicles in application of article 102A of the Schengen Convention. During 2009, three hits were registered.

Interpol Office

- *Extradition.* The NCB dealt with five extradition cases in 2009. The cases included the return of a UK national, wanted by the British authorities in connection with rape of minors, which occurred in the mid-1990s, and the return of two US nationals to the US, one wanted in connection with property fraud, whilst

the other was wanted in relation to environmental crimes. As regards the same case, there was also the return of an Irish national to the US. The US extraditions were made possible as a result of change of legislation covering the Malta-US extradition treaty, which came into effect on 1 July 2009. The NCB was also involved in the case against a Ukrainian national, who was wanted by the Ukrainian authorities in connection with misappropriation of a company. The case for extradition was rejected by the Court of Criminal Appeal. Apart from these cases, the NCB was also involved in the tracing of an Irish national wanted by the Irish authorities in connection with sexual offences. Checks were made and are still being made.

- *National Central Bureau, Malta files.* These comprise various files, mostly on requests by foreign police authorities, and a few requests from the Malta Police Force. The requests vary from simple requests on whether a person is criminally known, company checks or location, to requests for information on investigations being conducted by the Malta Police Force. One type of such requests consists of warnings on convicted paedophiles who will be visiting Malta for holiday. Apart from the usual reference of such papers to the Vice Squad, the particulars of these subjects are being entered in the National Stop List by the Interpol staff for discreet surveillance. Moreover, as a result of direct access to the registry of companies at the IP office, requests for information on companies are being dealt with in a shorter time.
- *Notices.* The NCB issued 11 notices for 2009 (one was changed from blue to red as an arrest warrant was issued). The notices issued by the NCB are Red (for arrest and extradition), Blue (for location), and Yellow (missing). Moreover, a Maltese national was traced in Australia, as a result of a yellow notice issued in her regard a year ago. Moreover, in October, there was the return of an English national to Malta, wanted by the Drug Squad, as a result of a request submitted through the local NCB.
- *Entries into the National Stop List.* Since 2008, the Malta NCB started inserting diffusions/notices on wanted/wanted for location/missing in the NSL. This is a temporary procedure where Interpol data will be integrated with the local PIRS database. In view of such developments, more computer units were given to the NCB.
- *Evaluation:* On 16th November 2009, the NCB was evaluated as part of the Peer Evaluation programme. The evaluators who were assigned the task of assessing the NCB were from the IPSG, IP Dublin, IP Vatican, IP Rome, and IP Nicosia. The evaluation report was favourable and a preliminary copy of the findings was presented by the evaluation team to the Commissioner. During this visit, there was the suggestion that NCB Floriana organises the European Regional Conference in 2011. Moreover Malta participated in the European Regional Conference and the General Assembly during this period.
- *Incoming/Outgoing Messages.* The year saw an increase in messages sent by IP Floriana. These were largely the result of communications between NCB Floriana and other NCB's in connection with the hijack of the Arctic Sea, last year.

During the year under review the Europol Liaison Officer attended various meetings, conferences and seminars abroad.

DISTRICT POLICING

REGION 'A'

During 2009, the divisional Police in Region 'A' effected:

- 407 searches and arrested 635 suspects in connection with crimes committed in this region or elsewhere
- 266 road blocks and road checks along major roads and traffic arteries
- 12,352 traffic offence tickets
- 17 breathalyser charges
- 258 for breaches of Smoking Regulations
- 100 charges in connection with prostitution
- 27 charges in connection with auto dealers
- 7 charges for licenses of shops for permitting minors inside their premises
- 5 charges for illegal hunting

- 60 vehicles were towed
- 1,375 charges were issued under the Litter Act

Inspections in places of entertainment reached the figure of 2,336 for the past year and 145 charges were issued for breaches of regulations. However, a further 139 other charges were issued for breaches of the Wines Beer & Spirit Regulations.

Night patrols by gazetted officers reached 254 in Region A. Usually these patrols are carried out on a period of 4 hours and these differ in times between 9pm and 4am.

There were 431 major commitments in Region 'A' for 2009, including village feasts, football grounds, water polo games, horse races, political commitments etc. 568 police personnel from Region A were detailed for football games during the past year, and a further 7,351 for other major commitments.

Eighty-two court sittings were held by the Police at Region 'A'. A great number of police personnel were detailed to cover these sittings in court, apart from police personnel who attended tribunal sittings. In fact, the number of affidavits presented by Region 'A' personnel during 2009 rose to 8,470 - court affidavits to 2,998, plus 5,472 tribunal affidavits, which brings the total to 8,470.

The district police detailed 12,336 police personnel for shepherding of school children.

During 2009, Region 'A' detailed 6,622 fixed-point duties, as shown in the following breakdown:

President	816	Embassies	1,095
Prime Minister	1,095	Castille Place	1,095
Mater Dei Hospital	1,613	Illegal Immigrants	365
Mt Carmel Hospital	543	Illegal Immigrants	

The following table shows the number of articles found/delivered to the Police/reported lost/restored to owners; TOTs issued, and number of persons prosecuted during the divisional sittings. Cases are classified as either contraventions or crimes (under 6 months punishment), for the period January-December 2009:

Districts	Articles found and delivered to the Police	Articles reported Lost	Articles Restored to Owners	T.O.T.'s	Persons Prosecuted	
					Contraventions	Crimes
1 P.D.	17	3,801	12	3,404	830	298
2 P.D.	17	293	14	1,268	631	486
3 P.D.	34	763	41	1,425	611	325
4 P.D.	31	753	11	3,675	570	123
5 P.D.	28	769	34	2,580	421	214
Total	127	6,379	112	12,352	3,063	1,446

Arraignment of Offences Liable to Imprisonment over 6 Months – Region 'A'

Offence	Cases	Males	Females	Minors under 18 yrs	
				Males	Females
Abandoned minors	1	-	1	-	-
Arms Ordinance	13	13			
Arrest	1	1			
Arson	2	1	-	2	-
Association with others to commit a crime	12	12	-	2	-
Attempted Homicide	9	11			
Attempted Theft	14	13	2		
Bail Conditions	4	4			
Blackmail	2	-	2	-	1
Bodily Harm	57	56	2	1	-
Bodily Harm against Public Officer	10	8	2	-	-
Breaches of Bail	27	26	-	-	-
Computer Misuse	1	1	-	-	-

Corruption of Minor	3	3	-	-	-
Corruption of Witness	1	1	-	-	-
Crimes vs Adm. of Justice	1	1	-	-	-
Cruelty to Animals	1	1	-	-	-
Cyber	1	1	-	-	-
Damages Involuntary	1	1	-	-	-
Damages Wilful/Voluntary	61	50	6	3	-
Defilement of Minor	7	6	-	1	-
Domestic Violence	16	17	-	-	-
Drugs Possession	77	66	12	-	-
Drugs Traffic	5	4	1	-	-
Environmental Law	2	2	-	-	-
Escape from custody/attempted	1	1	-	-	-
False Report	7	3	4	-	-
Falsification of Documents	18	19	2	1	-
Forgery	5	4	1	-	-
Fraud	40	28	3	2	-
Grievous Bodily Harm	52	50	4	2	-
Homicide	3	2	1	-	-
Illegal Arrest	11	10	1	-	-
Insults & Threats	27	25	2	-	-
Involuntary Grievous Injuries	10	10	1	-	-
Involuntary Homicide	3	3	-	-	-
Manslaughter on place of work	1	4	-	-	-
Offence against Decency	3	2	-	1	-
Offence against Public Officer	28	24	4	-	-
Possession of Explosive Material	1	2	-	-	-
Possession of False Currency	1	1	-	-	-
Possession of stolen Art	2	2	-	-	-
Post Act	1	1	-	-	-
Received Stolen Goods	15	12	4	-	-
Sexual Offence	8	8	-	-	-
Telecommunications Act	1	1	-	-	-
Theft	121	94	11	18	-
Traffic – driving	9	7	2	-	-
Unlawful Assembly	1	1	-	-	-
Violence against Persons	15	14	2	-	-
Total	713	627	70	33	1

REGION 'B'

The Divisional Police posted in Region 'B' performed, the following duties in 2009:

- 218 searches and 601 arrests of suspects in connection with various crimes committed throughout the Region
- 421 roadblocks were effected in major roads and traffic through fares
- 16,624 TOTs were issued
- 51 charges were issued following positive breathalyser tests made
- 936 offenders were brought to book for infringements of the smoking regulations
- 86 charges were issued in connection with prostitution
- 55 auto dealers were booked for breaching of their licences
- shop licensees were charged for permitting minors inside their business outlets
- 28 charges were issued for illegal hunting
- 157 vehicles were towed by the Police in contravention of tow zones, clearly indicated by the appropriate signage

A total of 7,794 inspections were made in places of entertainment during 2009, whereas charges were pressed against offenders for breaches of regulations. Other charges were further issued for other breaches of the Wines & Spirits Regulations.

The number of night patrols performed by gazetted officers in Region B reached 373. These patrols were usually performed between 9pm and 4am on a 4hr-shift. This does not include the number of night shifts

performed by officers from the number 6 and 6A districts every weekend in Paceville which tallies to another 362 of night shifts on an 8-hr shift per night, thereby amounting to a total number of 735 night patrols worked by gazetted officers in Region B. The four-hour shift is normally worked by Officers posted in 7, 8 and 9 PD, since 6 and 6A PD are exempted as stated above. In addition to the above, night patrols by the 3 gazetted officers posted in Gozo are also performed 3 times monthly which amount to 65 night patrols yearly.

There were 248 major commitments in the Region 'B' during 2009, which varied from village feasts, football, water polo games, horse races, political commitments and others which demanded the police presence. To cater for these commitments, a total of 4,912 police officers were detailed for soccer competitions, whilst another 5,339 were detailed for various commitments.

A number of 238 court divisional sittings, dealing with summary cases throughout the Region 'B', were held last year, for which a sizeable number of police officers had to attend. This does not include another 125 officers who were detailed to attend tribunal sittings. Since the introduction of sworn affidavits, the number of police officers attending for court and tribunal sittings has decreased substantially. During 2009, no less than 12,808 affidavits were presented during tribunal sittings, whilst another 3,955 affidavits were presented during divisional court sittings.

The number of police officers from within Region B who were detailed to shepherd school children going in and out of schools was 12,664.

Moreover, 8,104 officers were detailed to perform fixed-point duties with embassies and VIPs. These included the British High Commissioner's residence, the Russian Embassy, the Egyptian Embassy and the residence of Chief Justice. These do not include the officers deployed on guard duties with prison inmates and illegal immigrants receiving hospitalisation at Mater Dei Hospital, Mount Carmel hospital, etc.

The following table shows the number of articles found/delivered to the Police/reported lost/restored to owners; TOTs issued, and number of persons prosecuted during the divisional sittings. Cases are classified as either contraventions or crimes (under 6 months punishment), for the period January-December 2009:

Districts	Articles found and delivered to the Police	Articles reported Lost	Articles Restored to Owners	Traffic Offence Tickets	Vehicles Towed	Persons Prosecuted	
						Contraventions	Crimes
6 PD	141	2,284	188	1,781	39	994	393
6A PD	8	1,313	11	3,531	39	1,106	535
7 PD	15	972	19	4,154	25	1,201	349
8 PD	48	1,216	92	1,405	16	767	107
9 PD	80	1,225	28	2,351	43	1,418	301
10 PD	107	748	56	2,598	18	680	218
Total	399	7,758	394	15,820	180	6,166	1,903

Arraignment of Offences Liable to Imprisonment over 6 Months – Region 'B'

Offence	Cases	Persons arraigned	Males	Females	Minors under 18 yrs	
					Males	Females
Attempted Homicide	5	7	6	1	0	0
Attempted Theft	4	5	5	0	0	0
Bodily Harm	6	6	5	1	0	0
Bodily Harm/ f/arm w/o licence	2	1	2	0	0	0
Bodily Harm against Public Officers	25	24	21	3	0	0
Borehole w/o licence	0	0	0	0	0	0
Breach of bail	5	5	5	0	0	0
Cruelty to animals	2	2	2	0	0	0
Defilement Of Minor	11	11	10	1	0	0
Disturbing Public Peace	11	11	10	1	0	0
Domestic Violence	0	0	0	0	0	0

Drug Possession	18	17	16	1	0	0
Drugs/Trafficking	4	4	4	0	0	0
Failed to obey Police orders	3	2	1	1	0	0
False Report	8	8	5	3	0	0
Falsification	16	17	15	2	0	0
Firearms w/o licence	4	4	4	0	0	0
Fraud/Forgery	15	7	5	2	0	0
Grievous Bodily Harm	78	94	78	7	7	0
Grievous Bodily Harm followed by Death	1	1	1	0	0	0
Grievous Bodily Harm/Negligent Driving	6	6	5	1	0	0
Grievous Bodily Harm/Wilful Damages	6	7	6	1	0	0
Illegal arrest	4	3	3	0	0	0
Illegal Gaming	1	1	1	0	0	0
Indecent & immoral acts in public	3	3	3	0	0	0
Instigation	0	0	0	0	0	0
Insults & Threats	14	13	11	2	0	0
Involuntary Damages	13	10	9	1	0	0
Involuntary Grievous Bodily Harm	11	11	9	2	0	0
Involuntary Grievous Bodily Harm/Neg. Driving	17	16	13	3	0	0
Misappropriation	2	1	1	0	0	0
Murder	0	0	0	0	0	0
Negligent Driving w/o insurance	5	5	4	1	0	0
Offence against Public Officer	13	10	7	3	0	0
Pornography	0	0	0	0	0	0
Possession of Explosive Material	3	5	5	0	0	0
Possession of Petroleum	5	7	7	0	0	0
Pretended Rights	30	35	29	6	0	0
Prostitution	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protected species	2	2	2	0	0	0
Rape	3	3	3	0	0	0
Receiving Stolen Property	10	7	7	0	0	0
Recidivist	16	12	12	0	0	0
Sexual Offence	6	6	6	0	0	0
Sexual Offence – Gang Rape	0	0	0	0	0	0
Slight Injuries	83	110	59	51	0	0
Subornation of witness	0	0	0	0	0	0
Theft	109	116	92	21	2	1
Theft/Fraud	15	7	5	2	0	0
Theft/Involuntary Damage	1	1	1	0	0	0
Theft/Voluntary Damages	17	15	13	1	1	0
Violence against Public Officer	25	24	21	3	0	0
Voluntary Damages/Insults & Threats	37	37	35	2	0	0
Total	675	699	564	123	10	1

RESPIRE WARRANTS EXECUTED BY THE DISTRICT POLICE

The Districts executed the following respite warrants throughout the period under review and collected the sum of €171,600.38 as shown hereunder:

District	No. of Respite Warrants	Amount
1	53	€6,536.64
2	69	€20,977.45
3	24	€4,269.73
4	69	€24,977.76
5	26	€4,685.09
6	67	€21,105.48
6A	26	€4,106.20
7	41	€8,505.89

8	57	€12,700.79
9	71	€16,664.85
10	113	€47,070.50
Total	616	€171,600.38

JOHN RIZZO
Commissioner of Police

Courts of Justice Division

DIRECTORATE OF CIVIL COURTS AND TRIBUNALS

GENERAL

The Directorate's objectives are:

- to provide support and advice to the Director General on general management issues
- to provide timely and adequate support and facilities to the Civil Courts and Civil Tribunals, including the Family Court section, so that the members of the Judiciary within the Civil Jurisdiction may operate efficiently
- to submit policy proposals to the Director General on matters relating to the operation of this Directorate

The Director, Civil Courts and Civil Tribunals is also the Registrar of the same Courts. The Registrar of the Civil Courts and Civil Tribunals is responsible for: the registries and the officers attached to them; the filing and service of judicial acts; execution of executive titles such as judgments and warrants through Court appointed Marshals; judicial sales by auction section; the Archives section; and the Bookbinding section.

The Administrative Review Tribunal is a newly constituted tribunal, whose aim is to review administrative acts by applying the principles of good administrative behaviour. It is presided over by a Chairperson who shall be a person who holds, or has held, the office of a judge or of a magistrate in Malta.

The year 2009 witnessed positive developments in the following areas: the appointment of new members of the judiciary, in the field of Information Technology and new services connected with e-Government, in the refurbishment of the Archives and the new set-up of the Civil Courts Registry together with the centralisation and streamlining of services offered, a new Tribunal and various newly introduced legal procedures together with important amendments to the law connected with the Directorate.

IT INFRASTRUCTURE & SERVICES

At the beginning of the year, a programme of enhancements and upgrading of IT systems and programs was approved. A number of initiatives were planned and most of them implemented. This commitment was undertaken in synergy with the Malta Information Technology Agency Ltd (MITA).

This Directorate kept monitoring the timely inputting of judgements and records of proceedings on the website. Within approximately three days from the divulgation of judgements, these were made available for viewing by the general public.

Rights to access certain data-processing requirements by officers were monitored regularly and in certain cases withdrawn.

Family Court enhancements for statistical purposes were made in the Civil Case Management program. These enhancements were the following: nationality was included in the program so that the nationality of the parties involved in these cases is inserted; a new identity card report was created to be able to group the number of cases by couples. The date of marriage field was also added.

Discussions were held so that statistics regarding the newly appointed Administrative Review Tribunal will be displayed separately from other courts and tribunals.

Monthly statistical reports of introduced and decided cases in the Civil Courts continued to be published on the Internet. Regular cleaning-up exercises were carried out to ensure that these statistics remain realistic. These can be found on the site www.mjha.gov.mt. This data constitutes an important analytical tool particularly for researchers, members of the judiciary and the Courts' administration.

A taxed bill of costs report enhancement was implemented within the Civil Case Management program.

The new Judicial Sale by Auction site was launched and can be accessed from the same website. The aim of this site is to grant the public more access to the judicial sales by auction by providing details about the property and other immovable items that are going to be sold and when these are to be sold. Prior to the launch of this new website the judicial sales were only published in the Government Gazette. According to the site, the Judicial Sale service gives the facility to search for judicial sales that are due to take place in the future. The launching of this new site took place in the context of the new amendments in the law governing such judicial sales which came into force on 1 January 2009.

Enhancements in the Civil Case Management program were carried out to reflect the new set-up of the Civil Courts Registry. Thus the registry staff were able to insert all acts irrespective of the name and/or jurisdiction of the court.

Discussions were held so that the computer program generates a separate reference number for judicial letters under Article 166A of Chapter 12 of the Laws of Malta.

Maltese Civil Forms in the website www.mjha.gov.mt were updated to reflect recent amendments to Chapter 12 of the Laws of Malta. These will also be shortly available in the English Language.

AMENDMENTS AND NEWLY INTRODUCED LEGAL PROCEDURES

The Administrative Justice Act introduced the Administrative Review Tribunal. This is an independent and impartial tribunal with the purpose of reviewing administrative acts. The aim of this law, and therefore of the tribunal, is to provide remedies to citizens who feel aggrieved by a decision given by the Public Administration. Various initiatives were taken by the Directorate, including enhancements in the computer programs and training of staff.

Another procedure which came into force during the year under review was the European Small Claims Procedure. The aim of this procedure is to simplify and speed up the settlement of cross-border litigation on small claims. In this case the Directorate also took various initiatives as described above.

The Court Practice and Procedure and Good Order Rules were also introduced. These provide, among others, for the new pre-trial procedure and the Reference to the Court of Justice of the European Communities which is also a new procedure.

Amendments to Chapter 12 of the Laws of Malta brought very important changes to the law governing judicial sales by auction. The judicial sale is conducted by a public auctioneer and no offer is accepted if it is less than 60% of the value at which the property has been appraised. Other amendments concerned the warrants *in procinctu*, the warrant of seizure of ships or other vessels exceeding ten metres in length and the warrant of seizure of a commercial going concern.

ARCHIVES AND CIVIL COURTS REGISTRY

This Directorate continued with the exercise of upgrading the Archives. New shelving was procured and installed. Works on the new set-up of the Civil Courts Registry have been completed. Works consisted

mainly in movement of staff and amalgamation of certain sections of the registry together with relative enhancements in computer programs. This allowed for greater flexibility between staff members within the Registry.

TRAINING AND MEETINGS

During the year the Training Academy room housed training sessions on data protection and on the better use of energy sources.

Training sessions on a regular monthly basis were delivered by the Director Civil Courts and Civil Tribunals and by the Directorate's legal advisor on the newly enacted legal amendments. Sessions were held to convey information on newly introduced and forthcoming practices and legal procedures. Some of these sessions were transmitted via video-conference with the staff of the Gozo Courts. Orientation and introductory courses were organised for the newly enrolled Deputy Registrars, casual substitute executive officers and casual substitute clerks.

The European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice visited Malta and held a meeting with the Administration of the Court. During the meeting the Director delivered an overview of the Civil Courts.

A member of staff attended regularly the Data Protection Forum and meetings on Better Regulation Strategy.

Discussions were held with the University of Malta for the organisation of a Certificate and Diploma Course in the Laws of Procedure. This course will be on a part-time evening basis and will not be limited to the staff of the law courts but will be available to prospective employees and other interested persons.

MISCELLANEOUS

In 2003 the European Commission and the Council of Europe established a European Civil Justice day. This Day is an opportunity for the public to familiarise themselves with the civil justice system and to facilitate access to justice. It also aimed to create a symbolic event, a date for recalling that justice is first and foremost a service to citizens which enables them to settle their private disputes and assert their rights.

On 24 and 25 October, these courts celebrated this occasion by organising a very successful open weekend of the premises housing the courts and tribunals together with an exhibition. The exhibition included the original model created when the building of the Law Courts was still in its planning stages, which was restored for the occasion. Gowns and berets worn by Malta's former Chief Justices, photos of the various buildings which over the ages housed the law courts as well as insignia awarded to Maltese judges were also put on display.

CAUSES, WARRANTS AND OTHER ACTS FILED

The table below represents the number of court cases and acts filed in Malta during 2009 compared to the total number of cases filed during 2008. There was an overall increase in the total number of Civil Cases and a decrease in the Voluntary Jurisdiction Section, in Acts filed in the Family Court and in the Sale by Auction Sections.

		Total 2008	Total 2009	Dif. Jan-Dec 2008-2009
Court cases (<i>Kawżi</i>)	Superior	1,573	1,474	-99
	Family Section	508	425	-83
	Inferior	328	481	153
	Small Claims	991	1,169	178
	Admin. Rev Trib.	0	91	91
	Total	3,400	3,640	240

Warrants	Superior	2,213	2294	81	
	Family Court	372	331	-41	
	Inferior	4,047	4199	152	
	Total	6,632	6,824	192	
Judicial Letters	Superior	4,599	4,525	-74	
	Family Court	109	65	-44	
	Inferior	4,211	5,555	1344	
	Total	8,919	10,145	1226	
Judicial Letters (Bill of Exchange)	Superior	9	17	8	
	Inferior	349	295	-54	
	Total	358	312	-46	
Judicial Letters (Sec.166A of Cap. 12)	Superior	232	310	78	
	Inferior	3,231	3,992	761	
	Total	3,463	4,302	839	
Act Notifications By Hand	Superior	14,967	16,057	1090	
	Family Court	3,509	2,594	-915	
	Inferior	3,307	4,085	778	
	Total	21,783	22,736	953	
Act Notifications By Mail	Superior	24,969	24,247	-722	
	Family Court	4,135	3,933	-202	
	Inferior	15,077	17,806	2729	
	Total	44,181	45,986	1805	
Mediation letters	Family Court	1,338	1,320	-18	
Mediation Notes		366	384	18	
General Applications		255	189	-66	
Applications		961	1,127	166	
Researches		7,152	6375	-777	
Obligations		77	59	-18	
Hypothecates		77	59	-18	
Applications		434	479	45	
Sale by Auction (<i>Subasti</i>)		Subasti	230	157	-73
Schedules of Deposits (<i>Čedoli</i>)			4,274	4,117	-157
Withdrawals (<i>Žbanki</i>)	2,203		2,391	188	
Applications	Court of Revision of Notarial Acts	105	113	8	

COURT CASES

The table below represents the number of introduced, terminated and pending court cases for the years 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009.

Court/Tribunal	Year					
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Introduced	26	26	31	27	36	40
Terminated	29	30	37	26	27	35
Pending	47	43	37	38	47	49
Introduced	324	336	348	345	306	317
Terminated	352	374	360	437	371	366
Pending	923	880	865	756	691	641
Introduced	212	253	339	280	247	257
Terminated	281	263	322	294	282	308
Pending	269	256	266	246	211	156

Introduced	1,122	1,354	1,279	1,736	1,660	1,658
Terminated	1,855	1,579	1,490	1,564	1,550	1,677
Pending	5,912	5,108	4,903	5,022	5,077	4,896
Introduced	457	434	437	551	560	460
Terminated	455	425	456	450	496	401
Pending	1,001	1,034	1,020	1,108	1,161	1,187
Civil Court (Magistrates)						
Introduced	710	584	398	411	415	504
Terminated	658	699	549	421	399	471
Pending	1,489	1,273	1,120	1,110	1,126	1,150
Injustices Tribunal						
Introduced	3	0				
Terminated	94	49				
Pending	49	0				
Admin Review Tribunal						
Introduced						91
Terminated						0
Pending						91
Land Arbitration Board						
Introduced	13	34	20	43	19	50
Terminated	36	36	42	10	64	69
Pending	271	270	247	277	234	216
Rent Regulation Board						
Introduced	108	99	121	105	81	60
Terminated	112	97	82	45	74	49
Pending	335	340	378	417	422	431
Rural Leases Control Board						
Introduced	29	14	19	20	8	9
Terminated	29	36	26	8	17	14
Pending	155	134	128	138	128	125
Small Claims Tribunal						
Introduced	2,399	1,994	1,092	922	952	1,037
Terminated	2,287	2,240	1,621	1,168	992	930
Pending	2,113	1,859	1,208	959	929	1,035

SUPPORT SERVICES DIRECTORATE

During 2009, the Support Services Directorate continued to provide financial advice and management support, as well as administrative support services to the line operations of the Courts of Justice Division.

It was responsible for the managing of the central support services of the Division, ensuring the timely and accurate preparation and production of all control and management information and the provision of the full range of support services to the Director General in operations management.

The Support Services Directorate also directed, controlled and co-ordinated the administrative work and provided the Director General (Courts) with advice, recommendations and support on the relative financial and administrative business of the Division.

HUMAN RESOURCES BRANCH

- New Initiatives 2009: Various existing databases were incorporated into one database, the PERINFO database, complete with all the personal details of the Courts of Justice Division employees.
- Enhancement of Procedures: New forms used to calculate pre-retirement leave were introduced. Through such forms manual calculations and written workings in personal files have been eliminated. New forms for applying for all forms of special leave have also been created for use by Courts of Justice employees.
- Updating of Disciplinary Files: All personal files at the Division (over 400 files) were vetted in order to update disciplinary files according to the *Data Protection – Human Resources Corporate Procedures*.

- **Vacation and Sick Leave:** A monthly exercise is being undertaken to ensure that all medical certificates were submitted. The employee is immediately informed in writing that deduction from pay will be effected in the next pay if he/she fails to submit the required certificate by a specified date. All accumulated vacation leave from 2009 to 2010 was monitored to ensure that accumulations are correct and duly approved according to PSMC regulations.
- **IT Enhancements:** A new *Shared Networking system* among HR officers was introduced. This ensures continuity and cooperation and saves time. Furthermore, the Section can operate effectively at all office hours, including those hours when one of the officers is on teleworking. In order to reduce manual errors, electronic calculation of vacation leave entitlement of employees on reduced hours or on unpaid leave for part of the calendar year was introduced. Progressions and promotions when due to court employees can now be electronically calculated. This up-to-date information enables the HR Section to answer beforehand queries by employees. Furthermore, MPO can be alerted when the HR Section considers that a progression/promotion is due.
- **Proper Storage of HR Record and Disposal of old Records:** Old HR records dating back to the 1980s were disposed of according to their sensitivity. Recent documents are kept according to the time-limits set by standard regulation in the *Data Protection – Human Resources Corporate Procedures Manual*.
- **Training Initiatives and Seminars:** Different categories of staff within the HR Section attended various training programmes organised by OPM and SDO notably a training course on Skill Profiling by OPM. Moreover members of the HR Section attended a training session on the Public Service Recruitment Portal. This included hands-on training on the postings of calls for applications on the site's Content Management System. Training was given on the procedure for viewing and printing online applications received through this site and how to prepare them for the selection process.
- **Capacity Building Exercise: 2009-2010:** The annual capacity building exercise was undertaken, taking into consideration the Human Resources recruitment requirements for the Courts of Justice Division for the years 2009 -2010. These requests were adequately evaluated and prioritised, taking into consideration the established budgetary parameters and recent policy developments.
- **Introduction of notification form:** The HR Section prepares customised Notification Forms to be used in line with the imminent Procurement of Attendance Verification Systems. These forms record the daily attendances and absences of employees. This procedure has been adopted, pending the introduction of attendance verification systems within the Public Service. This procedure was initiated successfully as of October 2009. These forms are sent daily by email to the three Directors at the Courts of Justice Division.
- **Calls for Applications:** Calls for applications were issued during 2009 to fill vacancies in various grades; three recommendations for engagement of staff were submitted to MPO and PSC to fill other positions.

FINANCE BRANCH

The Finance section is responsible for the collection of fines, court fees and other revenue as directed by the Directors for Civil Courts and Criminal Courts. This section is also responsible for the payments to persons/firms who provide goods and services in connection with the day to day running and maintenance of the Courts of Justice. Payment is also made for other services directly related to the Administration of Justice such as Court Experts, Commissioners for Justice and other Tribunals. The Finance section is also responsible for the payment of salaries to all court personnel.

Every effort was made during 2009 to curb recurrent expenditure. Total actual expenditure for 2009 was €531,200 more than that for 2008 as follows:

Category	Expenditure 2008 €	Expenditure 2009 €	Difference (2009 less 2008) €
Personal Emoluments	6,877,500	7,224,000	346,500
Operational and Maintenance Expenses	1,227,700	1,279,700	52,000
Programmes and Initiatives	1,369,300	1,502,000	132,700
Total	9,474,500	10,005,700	531,200

The major increase in expenditure was under the Personal Emoluments category, due salary increases. The

expenditure increase under operational/maintenance was largely due to refurbishment costs of eleven halls and several judiciary offices. This work was carried out by technical staff posted at the Courts of Justice most of whom are ex Dockyard and Malta Shipbuilding workers. Their experience and technical knowledge was indispensable for this work to be carried out to high standards and within tight stipulated timeframes so as not to interfere with the work of the Judiciary. The increase in the Programmes and Initiatives category was mainly due to an increase of €151,400 under the Court Experts Item which was mitigated by a decrease in expenditure of €40,200 under the Refunds of Revenue item.

Capital Expenditure

The realisation of capital projects is one of the main functions of the Support Services Directorate. A total expenditure of €165,445 was made during 2009 under this category. This year's two main projects were the installation of photovoltaic cells for a cost of €48,800 and the replacement of one passenger lift at a cost of €28,000. Other expenditure was incurred for the procurement of furniture which amounted to €22,500 and flooring of various halls and offices of the judiciary which amounted to €14,000. Other capital expenditure was incurred for roof waterproofing, replacement of aluminium windows at the ground floor, turnstile for exit point and the installation of air conditioners.

Revenue

Once again the Division increased the collection of revenue over the preceding year. During 2009, revenue collected was €454,444 more than that collected in 2008 and was made up as follows:

Category	Revenue 2008 €	Revenue 2009 €	Difference (2009 less 2008) €
Fines	2,016,525*	2,177,551*	161,026
Fees	3,227,605	3,522,232	294,627
Miscellaneous	3,132	1,923	-1,209
Total	5,247,262	5,701,706	454,444

* These figures also include revenue collected from fines inflicted by the Courts of Magistrates (Gozo)

OPERATIONAL AND MAINTENANCE BRANCH

- All employees at the Courts were provided with a new PC through the leasing agreement that the Government signed with a private firm.
- Remote Visual/Audio recording was installed at the Juvenile Court in St Venera. Thus witnesses can testify without the need to be directly present in the Hall. Audio recording equipment was also installed in Hall 9 and a number of upgrades in the systems were done. The Administration is now pushing forward to change from analogue to digital recording.
- During the first three months of the year, new shelving was installed in the Civil Court Archives. The installation of new shelving is expected to continue in the coming months.
- The Criminal Archives was transferred to a larger area within the Civil Court Archives. New stores were acquired outside the Court building for the archiving of old documents thus providing the Courts with more room in the Archives at the Courts itself.
- A call for tenders was issued to partially refurbish the public area at the Civil Archives thus making it more convenient and welcoming for the public.
- A new lift that meets CE standards has been installed for the members of the Judiciary.
- New leased vehicles were provided for the Court Marshalls through a call for tenders.

Health and Safety

In order to address the health and safety risks at the Courts of Justice Division, an Occupational Health and Safety General Risk Assessment was commissioned. The administration is tackling the shortcomings highlighted in this report.

Security

A call for tenders for the provision of security services at the Courts of Justice over a 4-year period has been issued. The annual expenditure in security services was that of €55,679.69. Additional security cameras were installed in the corridors and in common areas including the ground floor and the second floor. Security officers regularly attend training courses to keep themselves up-to-date.

Refurbishment Works

- A number of Judiciary Halls at the Main Court building were fully refurbished during the summer months. New flooring was laid in three Halls. This exercise is expected to continue in the coming months to finalise all the Law Courts Hall flooring.
- A number of offices were also refurbished including those belonging to a number of Judiciary members and Judicial Assistants.
- New double glazed windows were installed in the main corridors on the ground floor which increased energy efficiency and safety for the public. In the coming weeks the windows of the second floor will be replaced as well.
- Old oil paint on hall door ways that are located in the main court corridors was carefully removed from masonry works thus regaining the décor of the original building.
- The old chillers were removed and new water proofing was laid on the administration offices.
- A new water draining system was installed in the terraces overlooking Strait Street thus avoiding rain and air-conditioning water from dripping onto pedestrians.

Green Initiatives

A number of initiatives were taken to reduce energy costs. Common areas were fitted with PL lamps and in other areas low wattage lamps are being fitted. Timers were installed in water boilers. Water tanks on the roof are now being supplied with water directly from a reservoir situated in the basement of the Courts. Solar lamps were installed on the fourth floor. It was confirmed that the current measures reduced overall electrical consumption at the Courts of Justice has been reduced by 6.25%.

A call for the tender for the installation of photovoltaic panels was issued; these were installed by the end of the financial year, thus reducing energy consumption from the grid. It is therefore expected that further reductions in energy costs will be experienced during 2010.

TRAINING ACADEMY

The training provided by the Academy during 2009 focused on three principal areas: (1) orientation programmes for prospective employees, (2) ongoing training designed to improve staff skills brought about by change and (3) informative training related to interests based on social life. A total of 20 training sessions were offered during the year.

All training provided was in-house and all sessions were well attended. Participant feedback was positive and general satisfaction was expressed on staff training related client problems and needs as well as to training sessions dealing with improving family/social involvement. As some sessions required employee involvement there was regular and frequent interaction with the facilitators.

The principal topics addressed during the training sessions were: the reforms on taxation and warrant procedures; information on the setting up of the 'Administrative Review Tribunal'; the duties and obligations of the Judicial Assistants, Court Messengers and Drivers; Data Protection as well as informative sessions on Waste Disposal, Energy Saving Devices, Drugs, Gambling and Alcohol.

The ongoing training sessions were facilitated by competent court employees and the training related to family/social involvement was facilitated by officials from WasteServ Malta Ltd, ECO Group and SEDQA.

In addition to the above, the Training Academy has, in collaboration with the Curriculum Management and eLearning Department within the Education Division and the Office of the Chief Justice, again invited groups of Form IV students from different schools to visit the Courts of Justice. The aim of these visits was to enhance the knowledge of the students on the role and functioning of the Courts and to foster an understanding on the judicial system. Besides these activities, the Training Academy also played host to the Launching of the Judicial Portal and for a working group session between the French Liaison Magistrate stationed in Rome and the Maltese Judiciary. The Training Academy also hosted seminars organised by SDO to Directors in the Public Service on the Public Administration Act.

JUDICIAL STUDIES COMMITTEE

In January an application was submitted by the JSC in collaboration with the Malta European Steering Action Committee (MEUSAC) and the Competition Appeals Tribunal from the UK (CAT) for a conference in Competition Law to be held in Malta. The application for the EU funded conference with the theme *The Application of EC Competition Law in Malta* was accepted and was duly held on 10 and 11 November 2009.

Another two conferences were held locally on the initiative of the Chairman of the Judicial Studies Committee. The first informal meeting was of the Working Group External Relations of the European Judicial Training Network (EJTN). The meeting was held at the Law Courts.

A second conference was held in a hotel in St Julians with the theme *Using EU Civil Justice Instruments*. Participants from six different countries participated in the two-day conference. The seminar discussed cross-border judicial cooperation and the application of EU mutual recognition instruments.

One of the principal achievements of the Judicial Studies Committee was the successful renegotiation of the new EJTN fees. During a conference in Berlin in 2008, huge increases were unveiled on the new fee structure for EJTN members with the consequential effect that the JSC was requested to pay €9,000 instead of the previous €1,000. This was never accepted by the JSC and its chairman successfully renegotiated the band fees which now stand at €4,000. Thus, the JSC will be paying up €4,459 instead of the proposed 9,000 Euros. It is worth noting that the €459 will only be paid in the coming three years since these are the contribution made by all members to offset the huge deficit run by the previous EJTN administration.

The JSC administration coordinator was appointed the Freedom of Information Officer for the Law Courts. The first meeting of the Freedom of Information network was held on 16 December

The officer in charge will handle and administer public requests as soon as the new Act comes into force.

DIRECTORATE OF CRIMINAL COURTS AND CRIMINAL TRIBUNALS

During the year, the Courts of Criminal Jurisdiction Directorate continued with its main role of assisting, giving advice and support to the Permanent Secretary and the Director General (Courts). It continued with the ongoing mission of providing logistical support and motivated trained staff for the better administration of justice and extend its support to members of the Judiciary.

MEETINGS

Regular meetings with employees were kept, providing the staff with the necessary information to ensure that they would be updated with legal developments and amendments particularly to the Criminal Code, the Code of Organization and Civil Procedure and a number of Legal Notices. Training was also given on amendments to the Public Service Management Code.

Several meetings were held with MITA Limited on initiatives to be undertaken by this Directorate during 2010; enhancements required to LECAM; and the jurors system on the LECAM.

The Directorate took part in organising a short course for the newly recruited employees by delivering talks on topics appertaining to the Courts of Criminal Jurisdiction.

JUDICIAL BENCH

One of the recently appointed judges was assigned to deal with cases pending before the Criminal Court and the Court of Criminal Appeal in its inferior jurisdiction.

Two new magistrates were appointed to deal with cases before the Court of Magistrates (Malta). One of them was assigned to deal with civil cases while the other was assigned cases regarding criminal jurisdiction.

CRIMINAL ARCHIVES

During this year, the Magistrates' Archives were transferred to a new place which is bigger and more appropriate for such a section. The new archives are on the same floor which houses the Civil Court archives but in a restricted area as files of Criminal proceedings are not open to the public. New shelves were installed which contributed to a more organised Archives.

CRIMINAL DIRECTORATE STATISTICS

The last published Criminal statistics on the Ministry's website dated back to October 2007. The department took over this task to try and update its records and eliminate the backlog. During this year the department succeeded to publish statistics from November 2007 to October 2009 and it is the Directorate's aim to keep the criminal statistics up to date. Apart from this, an overall exercise was carried out on the way in which statistics related to compilation of the cases which were being compiled. As of January 2010, compilation cases, regardless if the court is of Criminal Inquiry or Criminal Judicature, will be considered as such up to the final judgement.

COURT EXHIBITS

Apart from the task carried out during the year regarding the destruction of old exhibits, this department with the assistance of the Support Services Directorate and the Director General succeeded to allocate an enclosed area in the garage of the Courts, which could be used when the Court orders the seizure of vehicles.

During the year an exercise was carried out to try and retrieve old monetary exhibits which were still under the custody of the Registrar and which were exhibited during proceedings, but which proceedings have since been determined. The directorate succeeded in tracing a number of cases which had been decided during the last ten years and a number of applications were filed in the Registry to achieve the authorisation of the Court to confiscate these monies in favour of the Government. The total sum of €56,508.38 was confiscated in favour of the Government apart from other valuable objects such as gold articles with an estimated value of €1,856 which will be sold by auction.

The Directorate also started to address long standing issues such as identifying alternative premises to house bulky exhibits. It also tackled the problem of the St Andrews and Ta' Kandja Police complexes where hundreds of confiscated cars have piled up during these last decades. Nine of these cars were sold by auction and another 15 cars have already been identified and will be sold by auction in the coming months. This is a time consuming task as it requires in-depth investigation. Enquiries with court records and contacts with the Malta Transport Authority were made to establish the owners of these vehicles.

The Registrar filed an application before the Court to order the confiscation of a large number of fire arms which have piled up during the years in the archives. These fire arms were identified, an inventory drawn up, and a ballistic expert was nominated to estimate their value. They were later handed on to the Police. Moreover a number of old exhibits were destroyed upon court order and a relative *procès-verbal* of such destruction was prepared according to law.

Court staff continued to categorise and properly document all drugs, drug related material and valuable court exhibits. After carefully examining each court exhibit to be disposed of and ascertaining that the court case to which the exhibit appertains has been definitely decided, the item was photographed. Where applicable, the destruction of drugs and drug related material was undertaken. Subsequently, a report was prepared according to law and inserted in the records of the case.

PUBLICATIONS IN THE GOVERNMENT GAZETTE

The Directorate continued to look after the freezing of assets when so directed by the Courts or when informed by the court-appointed expert. This entails research in the registries and communication of same to any court appointed expert. Forty-nine freezing orders were published in the Government Gazette during the year. These orders were duly notified to the Public Registry both in Malta and in Gozo as stipulated by law. A new section was formed under the Support Services Directorate to follow such orders especially when the Court orders the confiscation of property.

SCHEDULE OF DEPOSITS

During the year, this directorate succeeded to end the task initiated in 2008 of inputting in the LECAM system all the Criminal Schedule of Deposits. All schedules of deposits made before the Magistrates' Court from 1991 to date and those made in the Superior Courts were registered in this system.

This system facilitates withdrawals of such deposits and provides efficient statistical information. Moreover it gives a clear picture of all the monies deposited by third parties before the Courts of Criminal Jurisdiction.

JURORS LIST

During the year, the directorate carried out an exercise on all those persons in the jurors list not bearing an identity card number as registered in our IT Cortex system. Research through the CdB successfully identified the ID number of these persons. This exercise will help in the forthcoming project of migrating the jurors list in the LECAM system, which system is more efficient when compiling yearly and monthly lists apart from eliminating paperwork, which has to be done monthly. The ID number will also help the police when checking the eligibility of persons requested to serve as jurors by means of their police conduct office. Also, deceased persons can be easily identified and struck off the list, thus avoiding having deceased persons in the list of jurors.

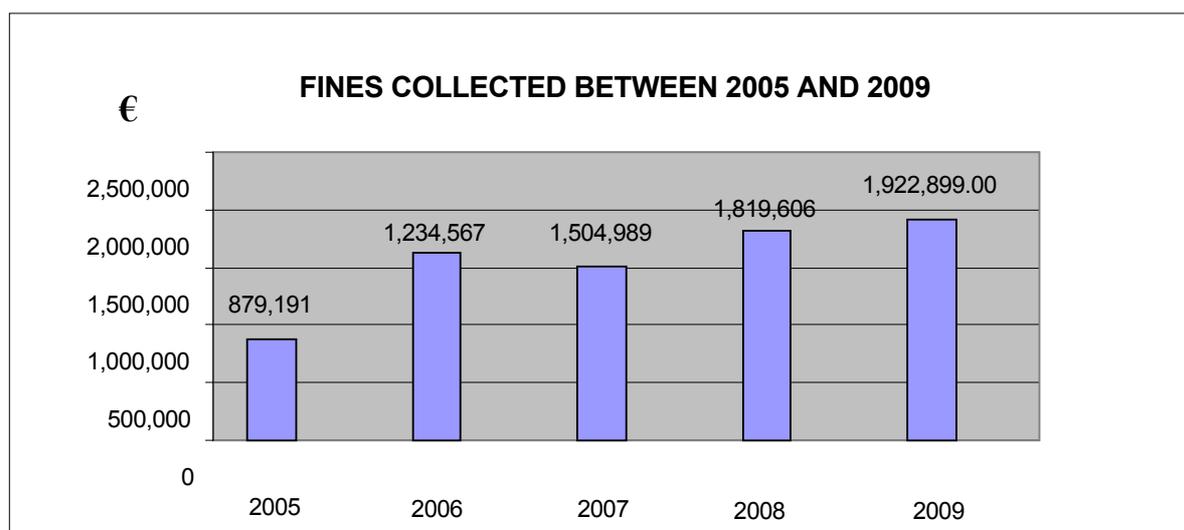
The project of implementing a different method for the selection the jurors based on a computerised program started this year. A number of meetings with MITA personnel took place and the project is in an advance stage and it is expected that the system will be implemented in 2010.

LETTERS OF REQUEST

During this period the Directorate received 23 letters of request from the International Co-operation in Criminal Matters Division. These were passed to the Magistrates who deal with such cases.

COLLECTION OF FINES IMPOSED BY THE COURTS

The long and sometimes complex legal procedures to collect fines, court expert fees and personal guarantees imposed by the Courts of Criminal Jurisdiction or the conversion of these into terms of imprisonment or detention continued throughout the year. As can be observed from the comparative table below there was an increase in government revenue when compared to the previous four years.



Sending regular monthly intimations to all fined persons, taking court action and liaison with the Commissioner of Police to execute conviction tickets yielded positive results. The Registrar regularly files applications in court so that the Court converts the unpaid fines/referee fees/personal guarantee into terms of imprisonment or detention. 1,677 Conviction Tickets were issued and handed over to the Commissioner of Police for execution.

COURTS OF CRIMINAL JURISDICTION REGISTRY AND ANNEX TO THE REGISTRY

During the year under review the Annex to the Registry handled the following transactions:

Services – Transactions – Records – Documentation	
Withdrawal of Schedule of Deposits	283
Police Reports	954
Additional Police Reports	270
Procès Verbaux, Court Files, and Applications to the Attorney General	6622
Procès Verbaux, Court Files and Replies to Applications from the Attorney General	5678
Suspended Sentences – Courts of Magistrates	382
Suspended Sentences – Superior Courts	37
Sentences over 1 year imprisonment – Courts of Magistrates	140
Sentences over 1 year imprisonment – Superior Courts	88

Two Deputy Registrars at the Annex to the Registry under the supervision of the Director/Registrar, continued with the complex task of assessing the fees and expenses incurred by and awarded to court experts. During the year the total sum of €1,125,975.26 was assessed to various court experts.

Acts – Revenue and other details		
<i>Filed by</i>	<i>Amount</i>	<i>Revenue if Applicable</i>
Malta Police		
Application	724	
Reply	203	
Notes	659	
Note of Submissions	34	
Note of Appeal	46	
Report	1	
Total	1,667	
Court Registrar		
Application	215	
Application Conversion of Fines	1,340	
Note	98	
Total	1,653	
Probation Department		
Note	94	
Report	53	
Application	60	
Total	207	
Welfare Department		
Note	2	
Report	0	
Total	2	
Attorney General		
Application	194	
Application re Appeals	73	
Reply	310	
Extension of time limit	157	
Note	100	
Note of Reply	3	
Application by Jurors	3	
Total	840	
General Public		
Affidavit	2,370	€16,496,32
Schedule of Deposit	331	€1,063,295,20
Application	4,331	€1,118,87
Application – Appeal	499	€1,239,31
Application re Jurors	524	No Charge
Note	565	€152,95
Note of Submission	51	€14,52
Note of Plea	19	€4,14
Reply	84	€15,92
Photocopies	287	€1,203,40
Witnesses – Juries	14	€99,20
Seizure of monies	15	€40,636,54
Prison Permits	748	

Cases Introduced and Decided by the Courts of Magistrates before the Courts of Criminal Jurisdiction - 2009		
	Introduced	Decided
Summary Proceedings	602	364
Compilations	1,261	1,238
Inquiries	913	1,112
Customs	31	17
Eco Tax	60	42

VAT	2,451	2,663
Health	160	180
ETC	237	319
Department of Labour and Emigration	133	148
Administrative Law Enforcement	521	526
Planning Authority	0	10
Traffic	1,379	1,177
Collisions	330	339
Districts	5,196	5,245
Minors	75	69
Health & Safety	83	109
Family Court	1,382	1,309
Total	14,814	14,867

Cases Introduced and Decided by the Superior Courts Criminal Jurisdiction - 2009		
	Introduced (Malta)	Decided (Malta)
Trials by Jury	57	29
Court of Criminal Appeal (Inferior)	510*	519*
Court of Criminal Appeal (Superior)	15	14
Total	582	562

*The introduced and decided cases before the Court of Criminal Appeal includes also appealed cases from judgements given by the Courts of Magistrates Gozo. In such case the Court of Criminal Appeal holds its sittings in Gozo. During the year, 42 cases were introduced and 40 determined from such sittings.

GOZO COURTS AND TRIBUNALS

ORGANISATION OF THE GOZO COURTS AND TRIBUNALS

Two resident magistrates continue to work on a roster basis and take cognisance of all acts filed during the proceedings of the cases assigned to them and prohibitory injunctions. Applications before the Court of Voluntary Jurisdiction, on the other hand, are dealt with by one of these Magistrates. These two Magistrates also serve as duty magistrates for the Islands of Gozo and Comino, and as such hold magisterial inquiries and carry out preliminary investigations. Furthermore, another magistrate from Malta takes cognisance of criminal cases.

The Court of Magistrates (Gozo), Civil Jurisdiction holds its sittings almost invariably from Tuesday to Friday, with an average of 40 cases per sitting. On the other hand, sittings of the Court of Magistrates (Gozo) in its Criminal Jurisdiction are usually held on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

REGISTRY

The single Registry at the Gozo Courts caters for both civil and criminal cases, as well as for appeals from the inferior courts. The following were the number of acts filed in the Registry during 2009:

Type of Act	Number of Acts Filed
Judicial Letters (excl. sect. 166A & 253 COCP)	669
Judicial Letters in terms of Sect. 166A (COCP)	172
Judicial Letters in terms of Sect. 253 (COCP)	10
Schedules of Deposit	385
Legal Protest/Counter Protests	39
Applications/Replies in lawsuits (application program)	2,962
Acts filed by the Attorney General	12

COURT OF MAGISTRATES

The following table illustrates the workings of the Gozo Court of Magistrates in its multi-jurisdictions (Civil):

Jurisdiction	Introduced cases	Decided cases	Withdrawn/ceded/ deserted cases	Pending cases as at 31/12/2009
Inferior	30	17	16	129
Superior (General Section) (<i>Sworn applications only</i>)	106	131	45	650
Superior (Voluntary Jurisdiction Section)	106	131	45	650
Superior (Voluntary Jurisdiction Section)	82	97	1	38
Superior (Family Section) (<i>Sworn applications only</i>)	45	22	9	56
Applications in terms of Sec. 258, 281(1), 466 and 836 of Chapter 12: Sec. 402 of Act XXX/1995, and other Laws of Malta	39	29	5	97
Applications in terms of Section 13 (3) of Chapter 354 (General Elections Act, 1991), wherein the magistrate acts as Revising Officer	68	25	39	4

FAMILY COURT (MEDIATION STAGE)

In the Family Court, there were 61 letters introduced at mediation stage by the end of the year under review and this includes all types of letters, be they regarding separation, maintenance, custody or other ancillary matters. There were 23 applications (*rikorsi f' medjazzjoni*) introduced, one note and 19 conjunct notes, the latter almost invariably comprising cases which resulted in an amicable settlement before the mediator. At the end of 2009, there were 94 pending letters at mediation stage, comprising also letters introduced since the setting up of the Family Court in 2003, the majority of which letters dating pre-2009 were superseded by letters presented anew or involving parties who lost interest in the matter.

The family cases which end up before the Court of Magistrates, Superior Jurisdiction (Family Section) are shown in the table above.

SMALL CLAIMS TRIBUNAL

The jurisdiction of the Small Claims Tribunal is to hear and determine cases involving money claims of an amount not exceeding €3,494.06. There were 39 new cases introduced and no cases were referred from the Tribunal in Malta. 36 cases were decided and three cases referred to the Tribunal in Malta, while five cases were ceded and 15 deserted. This Tribunal has 51 pending cases.

When the adjudicator presiding over the Small Claims Tribunal in Gozo abstains or is challenged, he is substituted by another one from the Courts of Justice in Malta.

COURT OF MAGISTRATES, CRIMINAL JUDICATURE/CRIMINAL INQUIRY

The Court of Magistrates as a Court of Criminal Judicature (*Kawzi Sommarji*) takes cognisance of all criminal offences and contraventions punishable with a maximum of six months imprisonment. During the year, 958 cases were introduced while 902 cases were decided, 85 were put off *sine die*, no cases were re-appointed from *sine die* and 138 cases were withdrawn. The number of pending cases stands at 786.

As a Court of Criminal Inquiry, 130 new preliminary inquiries (*kumpilazzjonijiet*) were introduced, one case was re-appointed from *sine die*, 50 were decided while 19 cases were put off *sine die*. This resulted in 185 pending cases in this area. None were transmitted to the Attorney General for the issue of a bill of indictment.

As regards magisterial inquiries, there are at present 333 pending, with 78 introduced during 2009, while 29 were concluded.

JUVENILE COURT

The sittings of this Court continue to be heard at the NGO Centre in the limits of Xewkija. During the year, this Court had 11 new cases introduced, decided 14, ending with seven pending cases.

COURT OF APPEAL

The Court of Appeal (Civil Inferior) holds sittings in Gozo to hear appeals from decisions of the Rent Regulation Board, the Rural Leases Control Board and the Small Claims Tribunal in addition to those of the Court of Magistrates (Inferior Jurisdiction, Civil), as well as appeals from other administrative boards which hold sittings in Gozo. This Court had 15 newly-introduced cases, decided 17 and had eight pending cases at the end of the year.

Appeals from judgements of the Court of Magistrates (Gozo) in its Civil Superior Jurisdiction are heard by the Court of Appeal in Malta.

The Court of Criminal Appeal (Inferior Jurisdiction) also holds sittings in Gozo and decided 26 cases, had 40 newly introduced ending with 23 pending cases. Four cases were deserted, while no cases were referred back to the Inferior Court.

The Registry of the Gozo Court is also designated as the Registry of the Court of Criminal Appeal regarding appeals filed from judgements of the Court of Magistrates as a Court of Criminal Judicature in Gozo.

BOARDS

The Rent Regulation Board and the Rural Leases Control Board deal with applications regarding matters between lessors and lessees of premises or land respectively. 2009 may be illustrated as follows:

Board	Introduced cases	Decided cases	Withdrawn/ceded/deserted cases	Pending cases as at 31/12/2009
Rent Regulation Board	3	3	1	19
Rural Leases Control Board	1	1	0	19

During the period under review, two lawyers practising in Gozo continued to serve as Official Curators and Advocates for Legal Aid.

The Judicial Assistant continued to gather evidence as delegated by the Magistrates sitting in the Court of Magistrates mostly, but not exclusively, in its Civil Jurisdiction. This officer continued to send copies of his records (*verbali*) and postponement of his sittings to lawyers through e-mail, thus extending the use of e-government and becoming more efficient towards our customers.

JUDICIAL SALES/LICITATIONS

This year witnessed the coming into force of the legal amendments governing judicial sales/licitations, whereby, *inter alia*, the judicial sale/licitation is held by the Registrar in conjunction with one of the public auctioneers listed in the Government Gazette for the purpose.

There were 43 pending judicial sales in the beginning of 2009. Nine were rendered as deserted and 14 were withdrawn. 28 new applications were filed during 2009 and 15 were concluded between September and December 2009, ending with 33 pending cases.

SCANNING

The scanning pilot project which has been running since 2008 now encompasses also all new cases registered since the beginning of January 2009 for both our resident magistrates. By the end of 2009, all acts relating to new cases introduced during 2009 of both magistrates were scanned and linked to the LECAM system, including those acts presented by lawyers during sittings.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND E-GOVERNMENT

Besides the increase in the use of e-mail to service its clients, throughout 2009, the Gozo Courts continued with its effort to improve the level of service to the legal profession and the public in general.

VIDEO-CONFERENCING

Internal video-conferencing equipment continued to be utilised during criminal cases involving vulnerable witnesses who were minors and/or victims of rape or abuse.

During the period under review, there was an increase in requests for connection with parties in cases residing abroad.

This year, to decrease costs incurred when utilising video-conferencing facilities, the Gozo Courts resorted to tele-conferencing whereby a more sophisticated telephone set which has 'conference' facilities was used. However, this means of communication is used only when connection is made through a Maltese embassy or consulate, where the embassy/consulate official can ascertain the identity of the person giving testimony as well as administer the oath. This tele-conferencing facility was used three times, once with the United Kingdom, once with Canada and another with Australia.

To cater for the ever-increasing requests for video-conferencing connections with parties residing abroad, this department installed 'Skype' facilities, making it possible to have video-conferencing facilities at a much lower cost and on site, at the Gozo Courts, instead of having to hold the sitting at the Ministry for Gozo.

STAFF TRAINING

Employees from all sectors of this directorate were encouraged to undergo training in various fields especially those related to their responsibilities. For some years now, training in the field of IT has been and is continuing to be provided by MITA.

Various employees also attended IT courses organised by the Staff Development Organisation in collaboration with the Ministry for Gozo on various IT programs.

The Courts of Justice Division and Office of the Chief Justice, in conjunction with the Department of Education, started to organise school visits whereby Form IV students are shown around the Law Courts and addressed by a member of the Judiciary. During the first visit at the Gozo Courts in October, the students were shown around the building, following which they were addressed by His Honour the Chief Justice and given a historical overview of the Courts in Gozo by the Judicial Assistant.

COLLECTION OF REVENUE

Revenue at the Courts of Justice is generated through fees paid when filing acts at the registry and the relevant registry fees collected once a case is decided and through the collection of fines inflicted by the Courts.

During 2009, a total of 1,262 taxed bills were drawn up, in their majority regarding decided cases. A copy of the taxed bill is sent through e-mail to the lawyers involved.

Furthermore, the following fines were inflicted by our courts:

Court inflicting fine	Number of fines	Amount rounded up/down to nearest €
Court of Criminal Appeal	16	156,594
Court of Magistrates (Criminal Jurisdiction)	414	192,656
Other court divisions/tribunals & contempt of court	53	8,379
Total	483	357,629

As regards the collection of revenue, €228,755.09 were collected from fines (including arrears), an increase of €36,352.09 and €337,610.73 by way of filing and registry fees, an increase (more than double) of €48,661.73 from 2008, bringing the total revenue to €566,365.82 which amounts to a global increase in revenue of €85,013.82 from the previous year. The substantial increase in revenue, which was double that obtained in 2008, as regards registry fees, came about after an exercise carried out by this directorate in February aimed at increasing revenue from this source, especially regarding older dues.

REFURBISHMENT OF PREMISES

In view of the fact that both resident magistrates sometimes hold sittings contemporaneously, and due to an increase in sittings of the Criminal Jurisdiction cases, the need was felt to have a third hall.

Early in the year, the hall which previously housed the Advocates' Chambers, was converted into a third hall with annexed magistrate's chambers. The expenses for the refurbishment works in this Hall were kept to a minimum. A more sophisticated recording system utilising CDs instead of the usual cassettes was bought.

Sittings of the Small Claims Tribunal and of the Judicial Assistant are usually held in this Hall, and the said Judicial Assistant uses the magistrate's chambers therewith annexed as his office.

The Advocates' Chambers are also being refurbished.

KEVIN MAHONEY

Director General, (Courts of Justice Division)

Department of Correctional Services

The Correctional Facility is part of the island's justice system. The Facility's aim is to instil in the prisoners a sense of discipline and responsibility and, as far as possible, to enable them to reform their character while undergoing their punishment according to law, with dignity and respect due to the human person. Inmates are provided with assistance to rehabilitate themselves. Every effort is made to make the inmates' term of imprisonment a helpful and constructive experience to re-integrate back into society.

At the main facility, programmes are being implemented with the purpose of reducing the levels of drug misuse and helping prisoners to stay 'clean' of drugs; this, coupled with a growing work programme and educational courses aimed at reducing illiteracy and innumeracy and providing skills for the outside world of work thus helping offenders to a better future.

Furthermore, the aim of the Correctional Services Department is to maintain inmates in a secure environment while at the same time foster the inmates' re-education and rehabilitation in the most humane and safe environment possible.

PROJECTS

During the year, the following works and initiatives were commenced, continued or completed.

The Facility experienced a new phenomena, the inmate population increased far beyond the norm of the previous years. At the beginning of 2009, the inmate population was 444; by the end of the year, the population had soared to 559, an increase of over 100 inmates.

Improvements to Security

Security is one of this Department's main concerns. A new measure with regard to the telephony system was introduced: only telephone cards issued by the Department can be used in the installed telephone boxes. Security equipment has been upgraded and research is being conducted to evaluate equipment best suited to detect illicit substances to be considered for use at entry points.

Structural Works

- Due to the ever increasing inmate population and in order to accommodate more inmates, the Medical Infirmary room /New medical location/professionals officer area has been redesigned and restructured.
- An area formerly used as a work-shop/store-room at the YOURS complex was refurbished and transformed into dormitory Division no. 15. Common rooms in Divisions 8, 12 & 13.
- A number of water roof tanks had to be replaced with new larger ones to ensure an adequate supply of water and to conform to Health Department regulations. A semi filled cistern dating back to 1842 situated under Division 4, was cleaned out where rain water is stored to be used as second class water.
- Rooftops at the Facility, SATU and the Forensic unit have been repaired and waterproofed.
- Toilet facilities have been installed for Divisions 5&6 officers.
- A number of other lesser but vital projects were carried out.

Division 4

Division 4 was closed down during 2008. It is being fully refurbished and upgraded to modern standards. Currently, works are in the final stage and the Division is scheduled to become operational in the first Quarter of 2010.

EDUCATIONAL AND ACADEMIC INITIATIVES

During 2009, the Education Unit at Corradino Correctional Facility continued to provide educational courses for inmates. A consistent number of 50 inmates attended courses on a regular basis. Educational provision was extended to cover Divisions 1, 2, 3, 6, 8, 11 and 13 as well as the Young Offenders Rehabilitation Services (YOURS) and the Female Sections. The courses provided were in the following subjects: computer, electrical, English, Italian, life-skills, Maltese, masonry, mathematics, philosophy, pottery, Spanish, sports, thinking skills, art, beauty care and chess.

Assistance was also provided to a number of inmates to attend ETC/ITS courses.

YOUNG OFFENDER'S UNIT OF REHABILITATION SERVICES

The Young Offenders' Unit of Rehabilitation Services houses inmates aged up to 21 years; in exceptional cases, the age is higher. During 2009, the educational provision within this Division continued to build on the belief that the main educational delivery should focus on the provision of practical courses that train and provide the inmates with skills for employment. A number of inmates who participated in food preparation and culinary arts courses organised by ITS, were awarded certificates. Most of these inmates/students also took part in a number of events organised by ITS. The collaboration between ETC/ITS and the Division continued to be strengthened.

DRUGS

The struggle to stop drug abuse is a never-ending task; every endeavour is made to stop drug abuse. As part of this task, inmates/visitors/officers are searched frequently at irregular intervals. Cells, common areas, workshops, school and even the chapel are thoroughly searched; every method/tool/test available is used. Unfortunately, a large number of the inmates at the facility are on drug or drug related charges. Sedqa, Caritas and the facility's own unit SATU are doing sterling work to prevent drug abuse within the Facility.

FACILITY POPULATION

The population has hit a record high during this year: on 2 December, 559 persons were in custody 115 more than the beginning of the year.

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Those newly admitted during 2009 were divided into 542 Sentenced and 356 under preventive arrest:

Newly Admitted during 2009		
	<i>Sentenced</i>	<i>Awaiting Trial</i>
Maltese Males	173	218
Maltese Females	10	11
Foreign Males	82	120
Foreign Females	6	7
Total	271	356

Note - An individual may appear in the statistical tables in any one of the categories, i.e. awaiting trial or convicted.
 - When a prisoner is required to serve a sentence for two or more sentences, it is the heaviest sentence that is shown

- Two or more sentences passed at the same time and ordered to run consecutively are treated as one in equal to the length of the two.

Sentenced Prisoners (By Offence) *	
<i>Type of Crime</i>	<i>No.</i>
Homicide and attempted homicide	8
Breach of Probation Order	15
Breach of Bail	22
Theft	135
Arson	1
Sexual offences	18
Drug Related	88
Other offences	32
Immigration and human trafficking	25
Threats	20
Prostitution	4
Wilful damages	1
Escape	16
Grievous bodily harm	14
Slight bodily harm	0
Forgery	18
Fraud	46
Debtor	0
Conversion of Fines (<i>Multa</i>)	69
Illegal arrest	19
Total	551

* includes inmates admitted in previous years and sentenced in 2009

Release of Prisoners	
On Bail	188
By Court Order	17
On Payment of Fine	34
On Termination of Sentence	253
On Probation	16
Presidential Warrant / Amnesty	2
Immigration Act	2
Acquitted	6
Suspended Sentence	18
Extradited	8

Admission of Inmates		
<i>Nationality</i>	<i>Sentenced</i>	<i>Awaiting Trial</i>
Algerian	3	1
American	2	0
British	13	1
Bulgarian	3	4
Burkina Faso	0	2
Cameroon	2	0
Chad	0	1
Dominican Republic	2	0
Dutch	4	0
Egyptian	1	01
Eritrea	4	4
Ethiopian	1	0
French	3	1
Gambia	0	1
Georgia	0	0
German	1	8
Ghana	1	0
Greece	1	0
Guinea	1	2
Indonesia	0	0
Iran	1	0
Irish	2	3
Italian	3	14
Ivory Coast	3	2
Liberia	0	5
Libyan	12	0
Lithuania	1	1
Mali	0	183
Maltese	229	2
Moroccan	1	3
Niger	0	12
Nigerian	24	0
Palestine	5	0
Panama	1	0
Polish	1	0
Portugese	1	0
Romanian	5	2
Slovakia	1	0
Somalia	11	5
Spanish	1	0
Sudanese	4	4
Syria	1	0
Togo	2	3
Tunisia	2	5
Ukraine	2	0
Uzbekistan	0	1
Venezuela	1	0

Inmate Population Statistics

Daily average population during 2009 was 492. The highest population on a single day was 559 (on 2 December 2009).

PROBATION SERVICES

The main objective of the Probation Services is to help ensure social stability by contributing to minimise the frequency of crime and by ensuring the re-integration of offenders to functional societal frameworks. It is aimed that the myriad of services offered will address the needs of the Criminal Justice System with regard to both the pre-sentencing and the post-sentencing phase.

Statistical Report

During 2009, the Probation Services received a total of 372 new cases from the Courts of Justice of Malta and Gozo, a 6% increase over 2008 (vide table below for a breakdown of these cases). An increase in the number of cases at the pre-sentencing stage could be noted for the third year running, whereas the issuing of combination orders and community service orders has remained low, although stable. In December 2009, the Unit was handling a total of 657 active cases

Offenders come in contact with this Unit for various offences, the predominant offence being theft, as has been the case in previous years. In fact this figure remained stable when compared to 2008. For the third year running, there was a considerable increase in the number of violent offenders referred to the Probation Services, including cases of grievous bodily harm or assault and domestic violence. Drug possession cases decreased by half when compared to 2007 but remained stable compared to 2008. In fact, whereas in 2007 drug possession made up 8% of the entire caseload, in 2008 and 2009 they made up just 4% of the entire caseload. With regard to drug trafficking cases, hardly any changes were registered in the past three years.

Of the cases referred to the Probation Services, 56 concerned female offenders while 294 concerned male offenders. This shows a slight increase over the previous year in the number of cases regarding female offenders referred to the Probation Services.

The age distribution for 2009 shows that the highest proportion of offenders who benefited from probation services fell in the 25 to 29 years age bracket. This constituted 25% of the entire caseload, as against 19% in 2008. There was a marked decrease in the 15 to 19 years age bracket, with this age group making up 17% of the caseload in 2009 as against 23% in 2008.. In 2009, the youngest age bracket, the 10 to 14-year age group went slightly up, after an unusual downturn in 2008.

In general, the shift noted in recent years to more difficult and more demanding offenders has become even more pronounced. With regard to locality, this year, Valletta once again yielded the highest percentage of our cases, with Żabbar, Hamrun, Paola and St Paul's Bay close behind.

Breakdown of Cases	No
Provisional Orders of Supervision	40
Pre-sentence/social inquiry reports	95
Probation Orders	190
Suspended Sentences	39
Community Service Orders	2
Combination Orders	6
Age Distribution (years)	
10 to 14	10
15 to 19	62
20 to 24	69
25 to 29	93
30 to 34	52
35 to 39	35
40 to 44	16
45 to 49	17
50+	18
Gender Distribution	No
Females	56
Males	294

Type of Offence	No
Illegal substances	15
Drug trafficking	22
Sexual offence	3
Breach of public order	7
Theft	154
Attempted theft	5
Fraud	15
Assault/grievous body harm	34
Corruption of minor	11
Drug cultivation	1
Domestic violence	18
Child negligence	2
Traffic offence	5
Stalking	2
Loitering/prostitution	26
Voluntary damage	8
Other	44

ABRAHAM ZAMMIT
A/Director Correctional Services

Civil Protection Department

INTERVENTIONS

The Civil Protection Department dealt with a total number of 5,164 emergency calls during 2009. These calls dealt mainly with fire incidents, traffic accidents, spillages and rescue of persons in distress. These figures also include a total number of 143 in respect of animal rescue.

Unfortunately, the number of hoax calls to this Department has continued to figure prominently in the number of distress calls, amounting to 176 i.e. 3.4 % of the total number of calls.

Incidents performed during 2009			
Land	Total	Marine	Total
Vehicles/Trucks	172	R.O Vehicle from Sea	0
Rubbish/Skips	407	Ship Fire/Boat Fire	1
Grass/Trees	1,374	Assistance at Sea	7
Gas Leakage/Gas Fire	49	False Alarm/Hoax	2
Houses/Apartments	158	Pumping	1
Shops/Restaurant	46	Site of Large Fish	0
Hotels/Guesthouses	13	Boat Adrift/Aground	6
Factories	18	Rescue of Person	2
Electrical Fires	33	Search missing person at sea	9
Industrial Stores	1	Rescue Diving	0
Oil Spills	1,379	Rescue of animals	4
RTA's	144	Reptiles	0
Farms	11	Oil spills/Oil Slicks or Drums	42
Ind Garages/House Garages	33	Stand by duty/detail	3
Sea craft Pmp/SC Fires	5	Dead person at sea	0
Floods/Flood Pumping	37	Hazmat	0
Collapsed Building	10	Chemicals	0
Rescue of Persons	76	Radiation	3
Fireworks Factories	2	Bio-logical	0
Historical Buildings	2	Inspection	5
Animal Rescue	143	Strange odour	1
Assistance /PLO	574	Gas Leakage	12
Others	197	Others	8
False Alarms/Hoax	174		
<i>Total</i>	<i>5,058</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>106</i>
Grand Total		5,164	

MAJOR ACTIVITIES

During the year in review, the Humanitarian Aid has responded to requests made by the EU, in conformity with the Agreement for the Civil Protection Department Mechanism in providing assistance following the disasters in Indonesia and Italy. Humanitarian material was also collected for the Palestinian population, who were affected by a civilian crises situation in their country.

ASSISTANCE FROM FOREIGN COUNTRIES

As part of the continued efforts to safeguard Malta's limited forestation areas, particularly Buskett, the Civil Protection Department requested the assistance of the French authorities to provide expert advice on

the mitigation of fire risks in woodland areas. An expert on forest fires was sent from the French civil protection authorities to carry out a preliminary assessment of the local situation.

Work was also conducted to enhance the response capabilities of the Civil Protection Department in the event of earthquakes. Following an initial agreement with Germany, a number of volunteers who operate under the umbrella of the Civil Protection Department, received training in urban search and rescue techniques. This training reached its apex during the last quarter of the year, when a search and rescue team composed of the same members participated in a full scale exercise, together with other teams from different EU member states, in Wesel Germany.

HOMES FOR THE ELDERLY

The Civil Protection Department pursued with the initiative to ensure that the homes for the elderly are up to the level of fire safety. Fire inspections were carried out by officials of the Department in various homes of the elderly and reports about the findings were forwarded to the Ministry for Health and the Elderly.

EDUCATION

The Civil Protection Department has continued with its aims of providing educational activities mainly aimed at students and school children. During 2009, there were a total of 39 visits to schools in Malta and Gozo (including government, church and private schools), as well as other educational establishments. Various aspects of Civil Protection were treated during these visits.

The Department has also maintained its primary duties of delivering public information during morning breakfast shows on various TV stations as well as Radio networks.

EU MECHANISM FOR CIVIL PROTECTION

The Department also participated in different meetings organised by the EU Commission to establish greater cooperation between EU Member States and Members of the European Economic Areas, in the field of Civil Protection.

Participation in various meetings by EU Countries holding the Presidency as well as Union for the Mediterranean and other meetings organised by Eur-opa Major Hazards Agreement were also part of the agenda of the Department. These organisations provide the prevention and action to be taken in case of major disasters.

IN-HOUSE TRAINING PROGRAMMES

The aim of the Civil Protection Department is to deliver best quality service to the community in cases of incidents. The best possible way to reach this objective is to maintain a continuous employee development programme as well as volunteers within the same Department.

Notwithstanding the problems that the Department must face to overcome problems related to human and financial resources, there is still the need to perform the tasks efficiently and effectively to save human lives.

The Department has also adopted other operational strategies to integrate the work of other agencies in other incident scenarios, such as flash floods and earthquakes.

PATRICK MURGO

Deputy Director (Civil Protection)

Airport Security

Mission Statement

To develop, regulate and manage a secure aviation system, and provide adequate security services for the protection of all property and stakeholders in the aviation industry in Malta.

RESPONSIBILITY

The Office of the Manager Airport Security (OMAS) is the appropriate authority responsible for the overall management and control of aviation security in Malta. The Office is responsible for developing, regulating and managing a secure aviation system, with the objective of ensuring a safe and secure environment for all passengers, airport employees, the general public and property.

NATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION SECURITY PROGRAMME (NASP)

OMAS is responsible for drawing up and maintaining a national civil aviation security programme, to provide the framework of regulations, standards and guidelines to be adopted and implemented by all entities, which directly or indirectly, are involved in aviation security at Luqa Airport.

The purpose of this programme, which is designed to meet the requirements of ICAO Annex 17, European Commission Regulation EC 300/2008 and ECAC Doc 30, is to protect the security, regularity and efficiency of aviation security in Malta. In July 2009, the 6th edition of this programme was issued by OMAS. The new edition reflects changes in legislative requirements as disseminated by the international security organisations.

Relevant parts of this programme are disseminated to aviation security stakeholders to enable these entities to develop security programmes and plans that are in line with national requirements.

Security programmes of entities applying security standards in accordance with the National Civil Aviation Security Programme, are submitted to OMAS for approval and continuous monitoring. These entities include air carriers, the airport operator and regulated agents.

NATIONAL QUALITY CONTROL PROGRAMME

OMAS is also responsible for drawing up and maintaining a National Quality Control Programme. The objective of this programme is to verify that aviation security measures are implemented in compliance with the requirements of the National Civil Aviation Security Programme. Monitoring activities are carried out by qualified national auditors within OMAS on a continual basis.

During 2009, the Office of the Manager Airport Security carried out a number of tests and inspections, with the aim of ensuring that entities concerned are carrying out the required security measures. Monitoring activities were carried out on various aviation activities such as:

- Access control, including airport staff and visitors' screening
- Aircraft security
- Passenger and cabin baggage screening
- Hold Baggage Security
- Cargo, including Regulated Agents and Known Consignors
- Air Carrier catering stores and supplies

- Air Carrier cleaning materials, stores and supplies
- Security equipment
- Public Areas

Furthermore, this Office monitored the various development and infrastructural works which were being carried out within the airport grounds. The aim of these monitoring activities was to ensure that works on buildings situated on the boundary between landside and airside were carried out according to the site plans previously approved by the Manager Airport Security.

AUDITS/INSPECTIONS AT FOREIGN AIRPORTS

The Manager Airport Security and two Assistant Managers were nominated by the European Commission to carry out three separate security inspections on behalf of the Commission. These inspections were held in Italy and Spain.

PARTICIPATION AT WORKSHOPS/WORKING GROUPS/MEETINGS

- *European Commission Aviation Security Meetings:* During the year, this Office participated regularly in the monthly EC AVSEC meetings in Brussels. Throughout these meetings, decisions towards the implementation of AVSEC legislation are made. Malta, together with other Member States, voiced its concerns about a number of issues.
- *Workshop - Screeners' Certification:* On 17-18 March, the Manager Airport Security participated in a workshop organised by ECAC, in conjunction with the EU DG Tren. The workshop was held in Amsterdam. New legislative requirements with regard to the certification of security screeners were discussed. Best practices were shared between Member States' participants.
- *Workshop – Risk Management in Aviation Security:* On 28-29 April, an Assistant Manager participated in a workshop organised by ECAC, in conjunction with the EU DG Tren. The workshop was held in Athens and covered the concept and key elements of risk management.
- *ECAC Security Forum:* On 19-0 March, the Manager participated in the ECAC Security Forum, held in Paris. The aim of this meeting is to bring together aviation security experts from Europe to discuss global trends, developments and challenges to civil aviation security, and the sharing of experiences.
- *Annual ECAC Auditors Meeting:* On 18-19 June, the Manager attended the 7th Annual Meeting of ECAC Auditors. An overview of all audits carried out in the previous year was discussed. In addition, auditors exchanged experiences and made suggestions for improvement on auditing methods and proposed updates to Doc 30.

AVIATION SECURITY COURSES – AIRPORT EMPLOYEES

During the year, OMAS organised a number of Aviation Security Courses, with the aim of increasing the security awareness of airport employees and to ensure that they understand their responsibilities in the security chain. A total of 962 participants attended these training courses.

The following courses were held during the year.

- *Aviation Security Awareness:* This course is obligatory for new personnel employed by the various airport entities. The aim of this course is to introduce new recruits to the aviation industry.
- *Certification of MIA Security Screeners:* This Office held refresher courses for MIA Security Screeners. Following a theoretical presentation by OMAS qualified instructors, screeners were required to sit for a written examination. Practical tests were also carried out for individual screeners at the screening points.
- *Certification of Regulated Agents:* Three courses were held for nominated representatives from regulated air cargo agents. The aim of this course was to certify those personnel whose duties involve the delivery of security training to other personnel within their company. Following the theoretical presentation and written examination, on which they were assessed, the participants were certified as security instructors.

- *Other specific courses* were held for the following airport and off-airport entities: Known Consignors; Air Cargo Handlers; Air Carrier.

GENERAL

Workshop on Integrated Approach to Supply Chain Security for the Mediterranean Region: This workshop was held in Malta, between 16 and 17 December. The Manager Airport Security gave a presentation regarding Enhancing security of the air transportation segment of the supply chain.

MARIO BUGEJA
Manager Airport Security

Detention Services

Mission Statement

To keep in custody in as humane way as possible those persons declared as irregular immigrants on arrival until such time that they are granted freedom of movement, i.e. Refugee or Humanitarian Status, or freed without their case being resolved, or repatriated.

GENERAL

The arrival of 2,775 immigrants during 2008 left a negative impact on detention centres as all centres were at full capacity. Therefore it was quite alarming to observe the arrival of more immigrants coming in on large boats right through January and February of 2009. Arrivals, and consequent pressure on detention centres saw a slight decline in the spring and summer months and henceforth overcrowding in centres was at a minimum. However, towards the final weeks of summer, it appeared that the number of arrivals was on the increase again but this trailed off by the end of October with the number of immigrants entering detention centres throughout 2009 totalling 1,475.

DETENTION SERVICE

The Detention Service was established on 18 August 2005. It is made up of personnel seconded from the Armed Forces of Malta and from the Police Force under one Command.

- adequate accommodation, including the necessary toilet and shower facilities;
- basic needs, such as food, clothing, hygiene and safe environment;
- access to medical care;
- access to the asylum system i.e. Commissioner for Refugees;
- access to non-governmental organisations;
- means of contacting home or their country representative in Malta.

CLOSED ACCOMMODATION CENTRES

Since the closed accommodation centres were first set up in 2002, 13,130 irregular immigrants have passed through them. At the end of 2009, there were 501 irregular immigrants in detention centres accommodated as follows:

- Safi Barracks Closed Centre - 334 irregular immigrants in three compounds
- Lyster Barracks Closed Centre - 61 irregular immigrants in two compounds
- Ta' Kandja Closed Centre - 106 irregular immigrants.

IMMIGRANT POPULATION CENTRES – 2009

At the beginning of 2009, detention centres were full to the brim with 1,864 irregular immigrants. The situation was exacerbated with further large numbers arriving in January and February. However, arrivals diminished throughout spring and summer as can be seen from the table below showing the number of arrivals up to and including 31 December 2009:

January	163
February	597
March	Nil
April	66
May	33
June	Nil
July	72
August	203
September	157
October	184
November	Nil
December	Nil
Total	1,475 (Arrivals in 17 boats)

OPENING OF A NEW DETENTION CENTRE AT TA' KANDJA

Due to the unrelenting arrival of irregular immigrants, particularly during the early months of 2009, little or no suitable accommodation was left in any of the detention centres. To this effect, the decision was taken to open the newly built accommodation block at Ta' Kandja to accommodate a large number of arrivals in early February. Regardless of finishing works still underway, 300 immigrants were immediately housed in the new building.

The facilities at Ta' Kandja were far more superior to those in other centres, and consequently it was decided that the purpose of Ta' Kandja was to serve as a reception centre for new arrivals who, after a number of weeks, would be transferred to other detention centres. This system worked well thanks to the cooperative spirit between the Detention Service and other agencies which began to operate from the new centre.

REFURBISHMENT WORKS AT HERMES BLOCK, LYSTER DETENTION CENTRE, HAL FAR

Hermes Block was one of the two accommodation areas at Lyster Barracks designed to accommodate immigrants since the first immigrants started arriving in 2002. This block has been in uninterrupted use for this purpose since 2002 and no improvements or refurbishing works were ever conducted because it was always occupied. The lack of proper maintenance resulted in the block falling into major disrepair due to faulty plumbing, inadequate and damaged drainage systems, and dangerous wiring which was constantly being tampered with and stretched to its maximum load. Consequently, back in 2007, the decision was taken to refurbish the block. Works were initiated in spring as arrivals were at a low and the block was vacated in May. The works included the demolishing of interior walls, new sanitary facilities were constructed, new plumbing and drainage made to cater for heavy demand, together with an adequate electrical supply designed to handle the load demanded at full capacity. In addition, all glass was eliminated and new doors were installed plus up-rated security measures were put in place. Presently, works are nearing completion. The remaining items include aluminium cubicles in the sanitary facilities and the fitting of Perspex windows. The total cost of this project is estimated at over €320,000, most of which will be covered by EU funding.

REPLACEMENT OF TENT ACCOMMODATION AT LYSTER BARRACKS HAL FAR

In early summer, used mobile homes which were acquired by the Civil Protection Department from their Italian counterparts began to arrive at Hal Far. With these mobile homes, it was possible for the Detention Service to replace the tattered tents used at the Tent Compound at Lyster Detention Centre, hence providing a far better standard of accommodation for immigrants. To date, all tents have been removed and replaced with mobile homes which were fully refurbished prior to use. Each mobile home accommodates a max number of 16 persons. Works in the now *Mobile Home Compound* continued with the refurbishment of the sanitary facilities which amounted to €10,000 largely funded by the EU.

VISITS TO DETENTION CENTRES

EU Commissioner Jacques Barrot visited the Lyster Detention Centre, Ħal Far where he witnessed the difficult situation in closed centres. As a result Malta was given political and financial support from the EU to overcome the challenges of illegal immigration. Shortly after this visit, Dutch and Swedish Ministers responsible for irregular immigration visited the Lyster Detention Centre, both praising efforts made to improve standards in detention centres even in European fora.

BRIAN GATT

Commander Detention Services

Commissioner for Refugees

INTRODUCTION

The beginning of 2009 was marked by a significant increase in the number of irregular immigrants reaching our shores. In fact, up to the first two months of this year, 795 irregular immigrants entered Malta. Throughout the rest of year the number of arrivals declined especially when compared to the first two months of 2009 and the arrivals of 2008. Nonetheless, the number of irregular immigrants entering Malta in 2009 reached 1,475, of whom 1,308 (i.e. 89%) applied for asylum. This Office also received 14 other asylum applications from other Third Country Nationals who either contacted this Office personally or otherwise were apprehended by the immigration police because they were not in possession of a valid residence permit.

Throughout the year, the Office of the Refugee Commissioner (ORC) has worked intensely to examine and conclude the cases within six months, an initiative that is heading towards the right direction as witnessed by the speech of Mr Jacques Barrot on 21 October 2009 in the Netherlands. One of the main priorities to fulfil this course involved the increase of technical personnel. To this end, seven new Case Officers were recruited in 2009.

By end 2009, the ORC received 1,308 asylum applications, of which 1,140 i.e. 87% of the total number of asylum applications that were registered in 2009 were concluded by the end of this year. Of these, 7 were recognised as refugees, 845 were granted subsidiary protection, 5 were granted temporary humanitarian protection, 237 were rejected and 46 were withdrawn. 112 applicants who arrived in 2009 were referred as minors by the Office of the Refugee Commissioner; however only 18 were accepted as minors by the end of 2009.

The total number of cases that were concluded including those applications pending from 2008 reached 2,833 cases involving 2,896 persons. Of these, 20 were recognised as refugees, 1,666 were granted subsidiary protection, 10 were granted temporary humanitarian status, 895 were rejected and 79 were withdrawn. Only 17 applicants were awaiting the start of the procedure by the end of 2009.

EU PROJECTS

Throughout 2009, the ORC also worked intensely on a number of projects co-funded by the European Union, an initiative which this Office decided to follow to improve the services offered to asylum seekers.

ERF Project 2009-2011: Post Application client preparation and asylum determination interviewing centre for asylum seekers which aims to adequately prepare TCNs for their asylum determination process

The implementation of this project marked a change in the Maltese asylum history. This is because through this project, amounting to a total cost of €303,384, there has been a drastic change in how asylum seekers register their desire to apply for international protection in Malta. Whereas in previous years asylum seekers were given a translated copy of the first registration form and were expected to fill it in themselves, this Office is now offering individual assistance to each and every asylum seeker. To this effect, interpreters and personnel from the ORC are assisting asylum seekers in filling in the registration form. Personnel from this Office, with the help of interpreters, are also giving information sessions to

potential asylum seekers as soon as they enter Malta, informing them of their rights and obligations if they desire to apply for asylum.

This process will be further improved in the coming months, because this Office is preparing an audio-visual presentation as well as notepads containing information about the asylum procedure in Malta and which will be presented to all asylum seekers as soon as they register their desire to apply for international protection.

Through this project, this Office will also be able to provide continuous training to interpreters which will focus on both technical and linguistic competencies. In this regard, advanced and technical English language classes were organised in 2009, and will continue to be organised throughout 2010.

The Emergency Measures Project (August 2009- January 2010)

This project is intended to strengthen the existing asylum infrastructure especially when considering (a) the increasing number of irregular immigrants throughout these last years; (b) the increasing number of asylum applications; (c) the increase in the number of persons arriving on the same boat and (d) this Office's commitment to conclude cases within six months from the day of arrival.

Through this project, the ORC employed 10 asylum determination officers on a service-based contract to examine the pending asylum applications, hence enabling this Office to fulfil its fundamental objective of ensuring a fair and efficient asylum procedure within the first six months of the immigrants' arrival in Malta. It must be noted that from 1 March 2007 until 28 February 2008, 1,726 irregular immigrants entered Malta, whereas between 1 March 2008 to 28 February 2009, 3,489 immigrants entered Malta. Thus, despite the genuine efforts made by this Office to conclude the asylum determination process as efficiently as possible, the increasing number of irregular immigrants throughout 2008 and 2009 has led to an additional 1,800 cases.

Considering the very short eligibility period of this project, this Office intensified the recruitment and the selection process as to ensure that the aims of this project are fulfilled. Asylum determination officers had a two-week induction period. The first week involved in-house training on different related topics such as refugee law, credibility assessment, interviewing techniques etc. During the second week the recruited asylum determination officers were divided in groups and placed under the supervision of a senior asylum determination officer. They were given the opportunity to observe their mentor and also to do some work under the senior's supervision. The asylum determination officers then worked under the supervision of a senior asylum determination officer, who reviewed their cases and provided feedback for them. Up to the end of the year, around 280 cases were seen to by the Emergency staff. It must be also noted that the asylum determination interview is most of the time not feasible without the services of interpreters. It has been calculated that up to the end of 2009, around 1,015 hours of interpretation services were covered by this Emergency Measures Project.

Through this project, the ORC also extended the current premises by investing in mobile offices. With the use of the new office space, this Office will have 12 properly equipped interviewing rooms in the different centres. Moreover, since these Offices will be used by staff of the Refugee Commissioner, they will be furnished and equipped to cater for the special needs of an asylum determining office, making the place better suited for the asylum interview.

A project manager was also employed to administer this project which amounted to a total of €322,800.

The GDISC project

The GDISC Pilot Project on Particular Pressures in Malta funded by the European Refugee Fund Community Actions 2008 depicted an example of direct practical cooperation between Immigration services of the GDISC network. This pilot project was set up by the GDISC High Level Working Group

on Particular Pressures, consisting of: Belgium, Czech Republic, Finland, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Sweden and the United Kingdom. The Office of the Refugee Commissioner participated as a beneficiary in this project. Throughout 2009 the ORC was offered the possibility of 10 linguistic analyses sponsored by the Dutch authorities and 50 linguistic analyses sponsored by the UK authorities.

Two Dutch experts also delivered a series of workshops which focused on both theoretical and practical aspects in the field of documentation analysis and civil status documents. Access to DISCS, a database which contains a collection of worldwide documents, has been granted to the Office of the Refugee Commissioner. This database contains specimens of civil status documents, which would help this Office to compare documents received with the specimens.

OTHER WORK

With the support of the Ministry of Justice and Home Affairs, the Office of the Refugee Commissioner has, throughout 2009, increased its participation in various conferences at EU level which has also helped this Office to discuss and share best practices with other Member States.

The ORC under its own initiative has actively participated in the resettlement exercise to the USA by formulating a statistical database, which will also be used for the relocation pilot project within the EU. This Office has also assisted other entities in the preparation of the related documents for this exercise.

MARIO FRIGGIERI

Commissioner for Refugees

Corporate Services Directorate

The main objective of the Directorate for Corporate Services is to offer support and advice to the Ministry's Permanent Secretary and the departments falling under the Ministry's area of responsibility on issues related to human resource management, finance and administration.

The Directorate's main responsibility is to ensure the most effective and efficient utilisation of the resources, both human as well financial, at the Ministry's disposal. It includes the collation and preparation of the Ministry's business plans, financial estimates, annual reports and monthly financial forecasts. Most of the work of the Directorate is deadline driven and depends on the target dates set by the central authorities. It also plays an effective co-ordinating role on these matters between the Ministry, departments and the central authorities, mainly the Office of the Prime Minister and the Ministry of Finance. Currently the Directorate handles all finance and human resource requirements and the processing of payroll of the Office of the Commissioner for Refugees, the Justice Unit (previously the Law-drafting and Translation Unit), the Office of the Manager Airport Security, the Detention Services and of the Organisation for the Integration and Welfare of Asylum Seekers (OIWAS).

HUMAN RESOURCES

During the year under review, the HR section within this Directorate continued to provide support and assistance to the Ministry's departments/entities in the recruitment and deployment of human resources. The DCS continued to liaise with the various departments to ensure the effective implementation of corporate human resource policies, systems and procedures prescribed by the central agencies.

In its concerted efforts to keep the staff complement of the various departments falling under the Ministry duly filled, calls for applications were prepared and/or issued to fill vacant positions in the respective departments.

Personnel in the HR Sections within MJHA departments continued to receive the necessary training on the compilation of Performance Management Reports. Such reports in respect of the General Service Grades were also drawn up on quarterly, six monthly and annual basis.

The unit also handled various requests from officers to perform teleworking in line with the recently introduced government policy.

During the year under review, information was also collated in reply to surveys carried out by MPO on teleworking and other family-friendly measures.

The HR Section was responsible for processing the progression of staff to the next higher scale provided for by the respective Classification and Re-grading Agreements of the different Classes and Grades.

Monthly employment returns were regularly drawn up and submitted to Management and Personnel Office and ETC as required by standing circulars.

Requests for the payment of qualification allowances were processed in time. Service and leave record sheets were drawn up and handed over to the respective officers who applied to fill vacant positions in other departments across Government.

Other duties performed efficiently by the HR Section within the Directorate involved the recording of all changes in the personal record sheets, confirmation of appointments, increments and superannuations, and processed on a daily basis requests for vacation leave.

Training and Staff Development

During the year, staff development continued to be given a high priority by the Directorate. Personnel within the Accounts Section of the Ministry and other departments were nominated to attend specialised training courses organised by the Ministry of Finance and the Staff Development Organisation on the Accruals Accounting concept.

As in previous years, the MJHA has once again funded another Certificate Course in Criminology at the University of Malta, thus giving a chance to police officers to obtain a university qualification in subjects related to their work

Staff posted at the departments falling under the Ministry were also nominated to attend training courses in IT, Data Protection, Health and Safety and other seminars on the EU and other language courses.

Boards and Committees

This Directorate is also responsible for all the boards and committees that fall under the Ministry for Justice and Home Affairs. Frequent correspondence is exchanged with the Office of the Prime Minister and the Office of the President, for the appointment/re-appointment of members serving on these boards in terms of the relevant legislation. A database in respect of such boards and committees was kept constantly updated and action taken to publish the necessary notices in the Government Gazette regarding the compositions of these boards and committees. Data is also submitted to the Department of Information for inclusion in the Government's official portal.

FINANCE AND OFFICE MANAGEMENT

The Directorate handles all financial and procurement matters related to the Minister's Secretariat, the Office of the Permanent Secretary, the EU Affairs Directorate, the Programme Implementation Directorate, the Policy Development Directorate, and those of the Manager Airport Security, the Justice Unit, the Detention Services Unit and the Office of the Commissioner for Refugees.

The financial management aspect was given its utmost importance by the Branch's daily routine work to ensure good governance. Monthly revised estimates were drawn up for the Ministry's vote and its five cost centres, whilst the monthly financial returns of the other departments which form part of this Ministry were also evaluated and monitored prior to onward transmission to the Ministry of Finance. Another important aspect was the drafting and the consolidation of the 2009 Financial Estimates in respect of the departments which fall under MJHA.

The Ministry's Votes of recurrent and capital expenditure for 2009 were continuously monitored for the best utilisation of financial resources and to take corrective action in cases where the amount allocated in the financial estimates appeared to be insufficient. Through this process, it was ensured that any excess expenditure was offset under other items of expenditure within the Ministry's Votes. During this process, the Minister and the Permanent Secretary were continuously updated of envisaged financial requirements in view of the discussions which were eventually held with the Ministry of Finance in connection with the Financial Estimates 2010.

The Finance and Administration Section within this Directorate performed the following functions during the year under review:

- drawing up of the relative payrolls of personnel deployed at the various cost centres and units falling under the Ministry, after taking into account adjustments, increases, allowances and overtime;
- processing requests for payment for the procurement of works and services;
- recording and issuing of fuel requisitions to government-owned vehicles while keeping a proper record of vehicle maintenance through the Fleet Management System. The main objective of this programme is to maximise the effective utilisation of the Ministry's transport fleet and control the movement of vehicles with a view to increasing productivity and minimise excessive fuel consumption;
- approving advance payments made by the various departments falling under the Ministry
- recording of inventory items procured by this Office and making the necessary information available to the departments in order to update their respective asset records;
- drawing up of quarterly returns of suppliers who do not provide the Directorate with a fiscal receipt;
- processing a considerable number of payments in respect of EU related projects;
- compilation and monitoring of financial returns as requested by the Ministry of Finance;
- raising, on a quarterly basis, financial information regarding Accrual Accounting;
- compiling information related to replies to parliamentary questions. In various instances, this involved the collection of information from other line departments and the related consolidation of replies;
- preparing the necessary documentation and closing of advances related to delegations proceeding abroad on official duties.

During the year under review, the Finance and Administration section processed 198 advances made to officers proceeding abroad on official duties and other ministerial missions, mainly on EU related matters.

Statements of expenditure submitted by officers from departments falling under this Ministry, to cover advances issued in connection with travel abroad were examined and certified correct before being submitted to the Auditor General and Accountant General in terms of standing Finance circulars and the Public Service Management Code. Claims were submitted to the Ministry of Finance for re-imbusement of expenditure incurred in connection with travel related to attendance during EU Commission and Council meetings.

The numbers of advances certified correct during the year under review were as follows:

Ministry for Justice and Home Affairs	198
Attorney General's Office	111
Police	531
Civil Protection Department	43
Malta Security Services	54
Courts of Justice Division	40
Correctional Services	1

GEORGE ZERFAFA
Director, (Corporate Services)

EU Affairs Directorate

The work of the EU Affairs Directorate continued to intensify during 2009. The Directorate ensured Malta's regular participation in discussions of a number of proposals put forward by the EU, which required Malta's constant input thereon. A number of these proposals related to asylum and immigration and this was always treated as a sensitive matter during preparations for discussions at EU level.

During the past months, discussions took place on the recast asylum package (including Dublin, EURODAC and Reception Conditions) and on the proposed Regulation for the establishment of a European Asylum Support Office (EASO). It is pertinent to note that the European Council in December 2009 decided that Malta is to host this Office, a first for this country.

During 2009, the Directorate coordinated attendance of officials from various entities falling within the MJHA remit to Council and Commission working group meetings and kept records of those meetings in which Malta participated both through its technical attachés as well as through the technical experts from the line departments. Line departments were immediately informed of the monthly calendars and agendas of meetings received. The Ministry for Justice and Home Affairs was represented at working groups very regularly and a few of the meetings were attended by the staff of the Directorate itself. The EU Affairs Director accompanied the Minister for Justice and Home Affairs to the Ministers' Council meetings on a regular basis. Reports of meetings were drawn up by the attendees and followed up by the Directorate. The Directorate worked in constant liaison with the technical attaches in Brussels and ensured a constant flow of information and coordination between both sides.

As expected, the Directorate continued to receive a constant daily flow of EU documentation which was distributed to the line departments according to the subject matter as soon as these were received. The Directorate was instrumental in the drawing up of explanatory memoranda (which are submitted to the Inter-Ministerial Committee, Cabinet and the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives) and a good number of instruction notes for use at the working groups in Brussels, especially those relating to the most sensitive issues for Malta. The Directorate also prepared instruction notes for each item that fell within its responsibility and that was discussed at the Committee of Permanent Representatives on a weekly basis. The Minister was provided with briefing notes for his meetings with other ministers within the Justice and Home Affairs Council as well as for any bilateral meetings that had EU content. Furthermore, when required, the Directorate prepared other briefing notes and talking points for the Prime Minister when attending the European Council or when holding bilateral meetings, as well as for the Permanent Representative when this was necessary. This Directorate also took part in consultation meetings with the private sector, organised by MEUSAC, on proposals falling within the Justice and Home Affairs sectors.

During the year under review, the Directorate continued with the initiative whereby Member States, through their representations in Malta, were briefed about the positions that Malta would be taking in Council during a meeting held for them one or two days prior to the Justice and Home Affairs Council meetings.

The Directorate coordinated the replies provided by Malta on various issues by means of questionnaires and written procedures and coordinated with the EU Secretariat at the Office of the Prime Minister for the transmission of such replies to the EU institutions.

Throughout the year, the Directorate was instrumental in ensuring that the necessary legislation for the transposition of EU legislation into Maltese legislation was drafted and this resulted in the timely implementation of the legislation that had yet to be transposed.

Efforts for recruitment feature regularly on the Directorate's agenda. During this year, the Directorate had one member of its staff less than its minimum complement but was successful in recruiting a new technical attaché for Police Matters.

DR JOSETTE ZERAFA
Director (EU Affairs)

Policy Development Directorate

ELECTRONIC MONITORING

The Directorate is presently conducting the necessary research in relation to the eventual introduction of electronic monitoring in Malta. This would result in a call for expression of interest or in the publication of a tender.

EUROPEAN MIGRATION NETWORK

The Directorate submitted the Annual Policy Report for 2008 in June 2009. Moreover, the preliminary Annual Policy Report for 2009, which includes a report on the implementation of the European Pact on Immigration and Asylum, was completed in December.

The Directorate, along with the Office of the Refugee Commissioner, was also responsible for the study *The Practice in Malta concerning the granting of non-EU harmonised protection statuses*, which was submitted to the European Network in September 2009.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT

The first legal notice bringing into force certain provisions of the Freedom of Information Act was published in July 2009. Moreover, a draft Code of Practice, along with a model Internal Complaints Procedure, was submitted to the FOI Officers of the different ministries and departments. The first meeting for these officers - the FOI Network - was convened in December by the Ministry for Justice and Home Affairs (Policy Development Directorate and Programme Implementation Directorate).

MEMORANDA RELATING TO EU PROPOSALS FOR LEGISLATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

The Directorate was involved in the drafting of memoranda relating to proposals for EU legislation and communications, particularly with regard to the immigration and asylum sectors. Such work was undertaken in cooperation with the EU Affairs Directorate and the other entities concerned.

PILOT PROJECT FOR INTRA-EU RESETTLEMENT

The Directorate, along with the Director General (Operations) and the Third Country Nationals Directorate, was involved in the Pilot Project for Intra-EU Resettlement of beneficiaries of international protection from Malta. In this regard, officials from the Directorate prepared briefing notes and speaking notes for high-level officials with a view to promote participation in the project, attended technical meetings in Brussels and were involved in a fact-finding mission in Malta by the Commission on 13-14 July 2009.

The project proposal was submitted for co-financing under the European Refugee Fund Community Actions in December 2009. A total of ten Member States decided for participation in the project, namely: France, Germany, Hungary, Luxembourg, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and the United Kingdom.

REFORMS AT CORRADINO CORRECTIONAL FACILITY

The Directorate is participating in the CCF External Monitoring Task Force, which has the function of making recommendations and overseeing the implementation of reforms for a specified time-period.

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

The White Paper on Restorative Justice was published in February 2009. The consultation process relating to the measures envisaged in the White Paper commenced after publication and had a duration of four months. Officials from the Directorate provided logistical and other support to the Consultation Task Force.

LEGISLATIVE MEASURES (VARIOUS SECTORS)

The Directorate is also involved in the drafting of legislation relating to film classification, firearms, fireworks and private guards, which is currently in preparation.

JOSEPH ST JOHN

Director (Policy Development)

Programme Implementation Directorate

INTRODUCTION

The Programme Implementation Directorate within the Ministry for Justice and Home Affairs deals with a vast array of tasks, with particular focus placed on EU co-funding matters and international affairs. During the year under review, the Directorate also became responsible for Freedom of Information and the related Coordinating Unit was set up in the latter part of the year.

PROJECT MONITORING AND IMPLEMENTATION

During 2009, the Directorate continued to monitor developments as regards major projects pertaining to the Ministry.

One major project in which the Directorate was involved was Malta's bid to host the European Asylum Support Office (EASO). Such office is intended to support Member States in their efforts to implement a more consistent and fairer asylum policy and will also be responsible for co-ordinating support teams (made up of national experts) that will be deployed at the request of Member States faced with a mass influx of asylum seekers into their territory. Furthermore it will also provide scientific and technical assistance for the development of asylum policy and legislation. The proposal for a Regulation to establish such Office was adopted by the Commission in February 2009 and accordingly a strategy was developed in order to come up with an effective media campaign. The Directorate liaised with the Office of the Permanent Secretariat and a Media Company was appointed to assist. In this regard, an informative brochure, DVD and an EASO website were created. Informative activities were organised in which the brochure and DVD were distributed amongst as many stakeholders as possible. At the Justice and Home Affairs Council, which took place in Brussels on 30 November 2009, Ministers agreed to place the Office in Malta.

The Directorate also liaised with *Aġenzija Appoġġ* in order to create a leaflet addressing the phenomenon of Trafficking in Human Beings. Such leaflet was eventually distributed at key areas where they could be accessible to potential victims of such crime.

Officials from within the Directorate were also actively involved in the process leading to the enhancement of the 112 (emergency number) system. Accordingly a task force was set up in order to come up with technical specifications enabling the Ministry to eventually issue a call.

The Directorate was also represented in the Prisons Compliance Unit which was set up in March 2009, pursuant to the Prisons Report issued by an Investigations Board. The Unit's main role was to oversee the implementation of recommendations made by the said Board.

GREEN INITIATIVES

The Programme Implementation Directorate is directly responsible for ensuring that green initiatives are undertaken by all the line departments within the Ministry. In view of this, the Ministry's Green Leader is appropriately deployed within the same Directorate. Throughout the year, this official continued to

maintain contact with the Green Focal persons deployed within the line departments, keeping them abreast with any developments, liaising with them on areas of related interest and issuing instructions accordingly.

The main activities which took place in 2009 were:

- the organisation of energy efficiency training;
- the organisation of waste management sessions in various MJHA departments;
- the distribution of waste separation bins;
- the carrying out of energy audits within various MJHA departments;
- the compilation of statistical information on paper/envelope usage and on water consumption within the various MJHA departments;
- participation by the Green Leader in various meetings organised by the Ministry for Resources and Rural Affairs.

CUSTOMER CARE

During 2009, the Customer Care Unit within the Directorate handled a total of 641 requests through the Customer Care System, the Customer Care generic email, the Ministry website Contact-us form and by telephone.

As per instructions issued by the Charter Support Unit, each department has to ensure that it conforms with a number of minimum customer-oriented service standards. In this regard, the Customer Care Unit of the Directorate regularly monitored line departments, particularly through following up complaints and issuing regular requests for feedback, in order to ascertain whether divisions and departments were compliant or otherwise.

During the year, the Customer Care Coordinator participated also in related Customer Care fora.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

International (non-EU related) affairs are managed by the International Affairs Unit within the Directorate whose main functions are:

- liaising with line departments on invitations for participation in international events;
- taking care of logistical arrangements during visits by international delegations;
- liaising with other countries (through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) on proposed bilateral agreements;
- ensuring that documentation submitted by local/international organisations, such as reports and questionnaires, are duly filled in and returned;
- keeping the Minister, Permanent Secretary and other senior officials abreast with related developments.

Invitations for participation in international events were received regularly from a number of international organisations, in particular the United Nations, the Council of Europe, OSCE, the Hague Programme and EuroMed. In cases where the topic of the meetings was of relevance to the Ministry, the invitation was forwarded to the appropriate entity in order to verify whether it would be interested in attending.

With regard to bilateral agreements, the Unit actively liaised with various counterparts in other countries (either through exchanges of correspondence or even through the setting up of bilateral meetings) in order to discuss points to be included/excluded from draft agreements. During 2009, four agreements were signed:

- Trans-national Crime (China)
- Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters (China)
- Co-operation Against Organised Crime (Ireland)
- Co-operation Agreement in the Field of Justice (Qatar)

The Ministry's main drive during 2009 was to secure a number of readmission agreements. In this regard a number of countries with whom the European Community had signed a readmission agreement were contacted in order to start negotiations on the related bilateral implementing protocol. Accordingly, negotiations were held with the Russian Federation, the Republic of Serbia and the Republic of Albania. Such negotiations were successful and the provisions of the three texts were approved. It is expected that these will be signed during 2010.

In line with the above initiative, in February 2009 the Ministry for Justice and Home Affairs welcomed an official Sudanese delegation in Malta in order to initiate talks on cooperation in the field of readmission between both countries. Negotiations were held during a visit that took place between 15 and 19 February 2009. During the visit significant inroads were made on reaching an agreement. At the end of the talks, both sides managed to eliminate outstanding differences and it was agreed that a second round of talks would be held in the near future in order to finalise and subsequently sign the readmission agreement. It is expected that the immediate benefits of such an agreement will be an enhanced and direct co-operation between the respective Immigration Sections allowing for easier communication and more rapid response from both sides.

Other areas in which the International Affairs Unit was involved during 2009 include:

- the compilation of Malta's response to the report by the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT);
- coordinating Malta's response to the United Nations Working Group against Arbitrary Detention;
- the compilation of information to be uploaded on the 5+5 Website;
- providing assistance to the Maltese Delegation participating in the country's Universal Periodic Review by the United Nations;
- providing logistical assistance in the organisation of the Malta III conference organised by the Hague Conference; and
- monitoring Council of Europe matters.

EU CO-FUNDING

The Directorate is responsible for EU funding matters within the Ministry. In this regard, an EU Funding Unit was formally set up within the Programme Implementation Directorate in 2007.

The principal areas of EU funding which are applicable to the Ministry for Justice and Home Affairs are contained within three programmes: Security and Safeguarding Liberties, Fundamental Rights and Justice and Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows. Three of the four Funds forming part of the Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows Programme – the European Refugee Fund, the External Borders Fund and the Return Fund – are managed directly (on behalf of the Commission) by the indicated Unit. It acts also as point of reference with regard to the other Funds which ultimately are managed by other stakeholders or directly by the European Commission.

As already indicated, the Unit is responsible on behalf of the Commission for the European Refugee Fund, the External Borders Fund and the European Return Fund. The current programming period for the European Refugee Fund, the External Borders Fund and the Return Fund is valid up till the end of 2013. Initially the Directorate (along with the other Member States) were required to compile Multi-annual Programmes for each Fund – these are strategic documents that give a general picture of the current situation, highlight related issues and indicate how the Member State intends to address them during the programming period. Subsequent to the approval of such documents, Member States would issue calls for projects on an annual basis. Such Multi-annual Programmes were compiled by the Unit and eventually approved in the last quarter of 2008. Up till the end of 2009, a total of seven Annual Programmes compiled by the Directorate were approved by the Commission and an additional three are envisaged to be approved during 2010.

Projections provided by the Commission indicate that up till 2013 Malta will receive €112 million for projects chosen under the External Borders Fund, €4.8 million for projects chosen under the European Refugee Fund and €5 million for projects chosen under the Return Fund. For each of these Funds Malta will contribute a further 25% from local funds. During 2009 the Unit monitored a total of 40 projects:

Fund:	External Borders Fund 2007
Organisation:	Armed Forces of Malta
Project Name:	Modernisation of the underlying communications infrastructure
What it does:	To provide the AFM with a secure, interoperable communications system.
Duration:	2 years
EU Funding:	€2,325,000
Organisation:	Malta Police Force
Project Name:	Strengthening Immigration Police Capacity for border surveillance and patrol
What it does:	To enhance and strengthen border control capacity & provide equipment.
Duration:	2 years
EU Funding:	€919,340
Organisation:	VISET Limited
Project Name:	Bringing the Sea Passenger Terminal in line with the requirements of the Schengen Acquis
What it does:	Brings passenger handling facilities to the Schengen Acquis
Duration:	2 years
EU Funding:	€540,234
Organisation:	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Project Name:	Upgrading of high-risk/high-volume missions, to enable capture of biometrics
What it does:	Will cater for the security upgrade of missions in Melbourne, Sydney, Toronto and New York. Will also include requirements to enable biometric capture.
Duration:	2 years
EU Funding:	€68,400
Organisation:	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Project Name:	Setting up of a new high-risk/high-volume mission and its preparation for capturing biometrics
What it does:	Will cater for the establishment of a new mission in Poland to increase consular coverage and facilitate the process of VISA applications.
Duration:	2 years
EU Funding:	€348,750
Organisation:	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Project Name:	Setting up of high-risk/low-volume missions in third countries and their preparation for capturing biometrics
What it does:	Total refurbishment of new missions including New Delhi, Tel Aviv, Ram Allah and Istanbul to facilitate process of Visa applications.
Duration:	2 years
EU Funding:	€346,575
Organisation:	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Project Name:	Upgrade of security features in low-risk missions in EU Member States & their preparation for capturing biometrics
What it does:	Will cater for the security upgrade of Athens, Berlin, Brussels, Dublin, Geneva, Lisbon, Madrid, Paris, The Hague, Vienna
Duration:	2 years
EU Funding:	€520,500
Organisation:	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Project Name:	Upgrade of security features in low-risk missions in Third Countries and their preparation for capturing biometrics
What it does:	Will cater for the Security upgrade in Melbourne, Sydney, Toronto and New York. Will also include requirements to enable eventual biometric capture.
Duration:	2 years

EU Funding:	€221,100
Organisation:	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Project Name:	Setting up of new low-risk/low-volume mission in an EUMS and its preparation for capturing biometrics
What it does:	Necessary preparations and total refurbishment to set up a new low-risk/low volume mission in an EU Member State, including the installation of biometric equipment.
Duration:	2 years
EU Funding:	€107,475
Organisation:	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Project Name:	C-VIS integration with N-VIS
What it does:	Will cater for the integration of the national Visa Information System (N-VIS) to the Central EU Visa Information System (C-VIS). Will include biometric capture of fingerprints for all VISA applicants
Duration:	2 years
EU Funding:	€219,300

Fund:	External Borders Fund 2008
Organisation:	Armed Forces of Malta
Project Name:	Procurement of 4 inshore patrol vessels
What it does:	Improving the availability and efficiency of operational resource assets and ability to participate in Joint Operations.
Duration:	2.5 years
EU Funding:	€7,200,000
Organisation:	Malta Police Force
Project Name:	Integration of SIS II and SIRENE II with national systems
What it does:	To finalise integration of Schengen Information System II with national police systems.
Duration:	2.5 years
EU Funding:	€2,470,983

Fund:	European Refugee Fund 2008
Organisation:	Armed Forces of Malta
Project Name:	Provision of essential services for the management of reception centres for Third Country Nationals
What it does:	Provides basic accommodation in service support to Third Country Nationals in closed centres whilst awaiting protection application processes.
Duration:	2.5 years
EU Funding:	€202,418
Organisation:	Detention Services
Project Name:	Provision of food supplies and medical support for Third Country Nationals residing in closed centres
What it does:	To contain the expenditure related to food and medical support in order to ensure that other essential services can be provided from within the budget dedicated to irregular migrants.
Duration:	2.5 years
EU Funding:	€334,021
Organisation:	OIWAS
Project Name:	Biometric IT-based platform for the management of open accommodation centres
What it does:	To provide accurate biometric registration of persons falling under the target group definitions and to receive/meet the consequent entitlements/duties and facilitate their access to services.
Duration:	2.5 years
EU Funding:	€48,803
Organisation:	Marsa Open Centre
Project Name:	Strengthening infrastructure and integration services for residents through self-empowerment at the Marsa Open Centre
What it does:	To improve 2 kitchens, recreational area, provide training for residents, improve health and safety conditions, provide medical care and service of a psychologist.

Duration:	2.5 years
EU Funding:	€174,821
Organisation:	Detention Services
Project Name:	Emergency Measures – refurbishment of Hermes Block
What it does:	Replacement of electrical system, water supply, drainage system, installation of urgent adaptations for an acceptable standard of living for the asylum seekers.
Duration:	6 months
EU Funding:	€416,000

Fund:	European Return Fund 2008
Organisation:	International Organisation for Migration and MJHA
Project Name:	RESTART – Voluntary Return and Sustainable reintegration in the Country of Origin
What it does:	To support the efforts of Maltese authorities to improve its integrated return management by facilitating voluntary return and sustainable reintegration for migrants in need of return assistance, thereby contributing to address the issues of overstretched migration systems in Malta.
Duration:	2.5 years
EU Funding:	€110,770
Organisation:	Malta Police Force
Project Name:	Activities of Forced Return
What it does:	The project focuses on the actual removal of illegally staying Third Country Nationals to be carried out by the Immigration Police.
Duration:	2.5 years
EU Funding:	€489,230

Fund:	External Borders Fund 2009
Organisation:	Armed Forces of Malta
Project Name:	Procurement of 1 Maritime Patrol Aircraft
What it does:	Entails the Armed Forces of Malta (AFM) of attaining an aircraft for maritime patrol with the assistance of EU Funds.
Duration:	2.5 years
EU Funding:	€7,272,373

Fund:	European Refugee Fund 2009
Organisation:	Armed Forces of Malta
Project Name:	Provision of essential services for the management of reception centres for Third Country Nationals within AFM Compounds
What it does:	Offering financial aid for the provision of vital services related to accommodation, to TCN's in quest of asylum in Malta, living in closed centres.
Duration:	2.5 years
EU Funding:	€385,012.50
Organisation:	Marsa Open Centre
Project Name:	Providing a better quality of life to the residents of the Marsa Open Centre
What it does:	Further construction on the work implemented at the Marsa Open Centre, in addition to sustain current services supplied to residents.
Duration:	2.5 years
EU Funding:	€184,809.00
Organisation:	SOS Malta
Project Name:	Opportunities for the Integration of Migrant Women through Empowerment and Social Enterprise
What it does:	Initiate opportunities of empowerment and creative activity through developing social enterprises, leading towards the integration of women with refugee and/or humanitarian status into Maltese society.
Duration:	2.5 years
EU Funding:	€30,569,79
Organisation:	Office of the Refugee Commissioner
Project Name:	Post Application Client preparation and asylum determination interviewing centre for asylum

	seekers
What it does:	This project can be categorised into three areas being the stipulation of information to TCN's, the renovation of the existing infrastructure and tuition for interpreters.
Duration:	2.5 years
EU Funding:	€202.837,00
Organisation:	Detention Services
Project Name:	Refurbishment of sanitary facilities at the Tent Compound, Lyster Detention Centre
What it does:	Renovation of 2 sanitary facilities consisting of the laying of new concrete, the replacement of tiles and sanitary fittings at the Tent Compound, Lyster Detention Centre
Duration:	6 months
EU Funding:	€12,000.00
Organisation:	Detention Services
Project Name:	Manufacture and installation of six staircases, allowing mobile homes to be placed on each other at the Tent Compound, Lyster Detention Centre
What it does:	Will cater for the fitting of a number of staircases allowing access to 1st floor mobile homes, thus increasing accommodation space for migrants and offering better shelter.
Duration:	6 months
EU Funding:	€14,400.00
Organisation:	Detention Services
Project Name:	Procurement of four mini buses for the Detention Service for transport of immigrants
What it does:	Will cater for the procurement of four mini buses for the transport of immigrants to and from health and asylum determination process appointments eliminating cancellations and delays thus certifying that following the 6 month period of emergency measures, transport facilities are still available for the immigrants in detention.
Duration:	6 months
EU Funding:	€105,600.00
Organisation:	Detention Services
Project Name:	Construction of separate recreational yards for single females and married couples at the Safi Detention Centre
What it does:	Consists of the division of the recreational area at the Safi detention centre to separate single females from married couples, eliminating the problem of gender based sexual abuse
Duration:	6 months
EU Funding:	€131,200.00
Organisation:	Detention Services
Project Name:	Refurbishment of a derelict building into a Medical Isolation Section at Safi Detention Centre
What it does:	Will cater for the refurbishment of a derelict building present at the Safi Detention Centre to provide as a medical isolation facility to accommodate individuals from the immigrant population with infectious diseases.
Duration:	6 months
EU Funding:	€18,400
Organisation:	Detention Services
Project Name:	Provision of metal dining tables
What it does:	Consists of the procurement of 40 metal dining tables to be used in the Lyster and Safi closed accommodation centres.
Duration:	6 months
EU Funding:	€8,800.00
Organisation:	AWAS
Project Name:	Improvement of sanitary and dining facilities at Hal Far (Hangar) pen Centre
What it does:	Will cater for the completion of works on existing sanitary and dining facilities and their extension, certifying that minimum standards are reached and guaranteeing a better standard of living for immigrants residing in the Hal Far (Hangar) Open Centre.
Duration:	6 months
EU Funding:	€281,600.00
Organisation:	AWAS

Project Name:	Procurement of supplies for the immigrant population in the open centres
What it does:	Will cater for bedding items and replacements tents, ensuring a good stock of these supplies, thus contributing to a better standard of living.
Duration:	6 months
EU Funding:	€154,400.00
Organisation:	AWAS
Project Name:	Improvement to reception facilities (open centres) – works for the construction and servicing of a guard room, security grilles and gates, and ancillary work at the Marsa Open Centre.
What it does:	Entails the finishing of a reception facility, to ensure that Marsa Open Centre can actually accomplish the task of safely receiving residents, mainly the most vulnerable.
Duration:	6 months
EU Funding:	€36,000.00
Organisation:	AWAS
Project Name:	Transport Facilities for immigrants residing in open centres managed by AWAS
What it does:	Will comprise the procurement of a minivan and a pickup truck to be used to transport the immigrant residents to the various medical and asylum determination appointments and for the fast and timely transport of supplies in the open centres.
Duration:	6 months
EU Funding:	€36,000.00
Organisation:	Office of the Refugee Commissioner
Project Name:	Increasing the operational capacity of the Office of the Refugee Commissioner
What it does:	Will cater for the recruitment of 10 asylum determination officers and interpreters. This project entails also the procurement of the necessary equipment to conduct their duties, increasing the number of asylum applications processed.
Duration:	6 months
EU Funding:	€36,000.00
Organisation:	Health Department
Project Name:	The setting-up of mobile homes to be used as isolation and treatment units by the Health Department
What it does:	Will consist of the setting up by the Health Department of mobile homes to be used as medical isolation units for the isolation and treatment of immigrants with infectious diseases to prevent wide outbreaks of these diseases in the immigrant population.
Duration:	6 months
EU Funding:	€56,000.00

Fund:	European Return Fund 2009
Organisation:	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Project Name:	DAR 2
What it does:	The project constructs upon the experience of a previous project called DAR and focused on various age groups and target groups depending on their motivation to return to their country of origin.
Duration:	2.5 years
EU Funding:	€436,028.25
Organisation:	Malta Police Force
Project Name:	Activities of Forced Return
What it does:	The project focuses on the actual removal of illegally staying Third Country Nationals to be carried out by the Immigration Police.
Duration:	2.5 years
EU Funding:	€97,345.55
Organisation:	Ministry for Justice and Home Affairs
Project Name:	Finalising Readmission Agreements with Countries of Origin
What it does:	Develop relations with Sudan in order to facilitate the procurement of documents of potential returnees.
Duration:	2.5 years
EU Funding:	€3,611.63

Organisation:	Ministry for Justice and Home Affairs / ICMPD
Project Name:	Strengthening Malta's long-term Return Management Capacities – MAREMCA Project
What it does:	The project seeks to scrutinise the various aspects of migration management so as to build a more structured return policy.
Duration:	2.5 years
EU Funding:	€103,614.75

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

In 2009, a Freedom of Information Coordinating Unit was set up within the Programme Implementation Directorate in order to serve as a focal point for matters relating to freedom of information. The Unit will oversee the setting up of a Freedom of Information Officer Network which shall be led by the same Unit and shall incorporate all Freedom of Information Officers and their alternates. The Network shall, among other duties, provide a forum for the exchange of best practices and experiences among the various members, facilitate training initiatives, and serve as a practical medium through which matters calling for reviews of procedures can be brought to the fore.

Accordingly the network was set up in the latter part of the year and the first meeting was held in December.

JESMOND CAMILLERI

Director (Programme Implementation)

Information Management Unit

INTRODUCTION

The Chief Information Officer (CIO) is tasked with the responsibility of creating policies and strategies for the Ministry's information management and technology and leads the Information Management Unit within the Ministry for Justice and Home Affairs.

The CIO has a leadership role in re-engineering MJHA's business processes and the underpinning ICT infrastructures to increase the productive, efficient and valuable use of information.

This office is embarking on various ICT initiatives on an unprecedented level mainly aimed at improving the business processes at the Courts of Justice, Police, the Attorney General's Office, the Justice Unit and CCF. Significant effort is being directed to manage Schengen and Integrated Border Management related projects. This office is also embarking on various other initiatives to improve the deployment of information technology across all other department within this Ministry.

JUSTICE PROGRAMME

The overall Justice Programme was defined through various blueprints of how the business at the Courts of Justice is going to operate at the end of its period. Apart for the various ICT infrastructural initiatives related to upgrading core software applications for Courts, and the upgrading of server and networking equipment, the European e-Justice initiative has been considered in the drafting of the Justice Programme. Various e-Government initiatives are included in the programme and are currently being developed. Benefits for the citizens and Government are the drivers behind the definition of these blueprints and the high level objectives. The main objective behind the Justice Programme is to bridge the current portfolio of justice related ICT projects and the future programme and cluster initiatives defined by MITA's strategy.

The ultimate objective of the Justice Programme is the ability to give better access to justice to all local and European citizens, judicial and legal communities. A robust core system maintained up to date with the latest technology is currently being developed to be able to provide court services online. These services will facilitate the possibility to interact with other EU Member states through services offered on the European e-Justice portal.

POLICE

Major current projects within Police consist of the Criminal Records System, SISII, and PRÜM. There are also various medium-sized projects being implemented within Police.

The Criminal Records Office (CRO) at the Malta Police Force (MPF) was operating a paper-based process. It is now in need to implement a computerised system as a local business process requirement as well as to enable them to attain the near future objective of interconnection with other EU member state CROs for the exchange of data on criminal investigative cooperation. Completion of this project is therefore mandatory as the first step towards achieving the EU initiative. On a local business process level, the project will eliminate the current manual paper-based process. Once the data is in electronic format,

this project will allow CRO to maintain data relating to investigative cases, related judgements (acquittal, conviction and discontinuation) allowing them to perform their function more effectively. Considering the particular legal nature of police operations, not being solely investigative but also prosecutorial in Malta, this project will enhance the prosecutorial role along with the investigative roles, and complement police cooperation within EU member states.

In December 2007, Malta became fully integrated in the Schengen zone, lifting sea borders in December 2007 and air borders in March 2008. This involved, amongst others, considerable changes in the airport, seaport, police operating procedures, police cooperation, data protection and the consulates that will issue Schengen visas. These changes had to be implemented to a strict set of regulations and the verification of the changes implemented in each area are carried out by a peer evaluation process with a large team of experts from the Member States under the auspices of the Schengen Evaluation Working Group (Sch-Eval WG) of the Council of the EU.

The technical prerequisite, which is of key importance, was the putting into operation of the second-generation Schengen Information System better known as SIS-II.

Currently MJHA is at the last phases of installing the hardware for the main SISII infrastructure at the primary data centre. Software and hardware contractors are currently working hand in hand to provide the infrastructure setup and necessary network and software configuration to host the SISII application. The next phase will include testing of the actual infrastructure with the European Central system playground and the installation and modification of the SISII application by the core software contractor.

The implications of the implementation of the Prüm decision for Malta consists of the legal transposition and the technical implementation of a DNA database, the replacement of the existing Dactyloscopic identification system better known as AFIS and the modification of vehicle registration database together with the implementation of the EUCARIS II software. Work is now underway to issue the tenders for the Prüm related ICT equipment. The major part of the systems related to Prüm will be commissioned by 2010.

The EU Commission recently communicated a legislative package to establish an Agency responsible for the long-term operational management of the second-generation Schengen Information System (SISII), Visa Information System (VIS) and EURODAC. In addition, the Agency could be given responsibility for other large-scale IT systems in the area of freedom, security and justice. There is a huge consultation process going on at the moment in both the Schengen *acquis* and Information Exchange working parties dealing with the set-up of this IT Management Agency. To set up the Agency, member states, including Malta would be required to appoint two persons on the management board (one permanent and one alternative) and initially three technical persons on the advisory committee seemingly on a full-time basis and probably based abroad.

Each member on the advisory committee would cover SISII VIS and EURODAC accordingly. As more projects are handled by the Agency, more technical persons would have to be allocated by MT to offer their contribution on each particular project.

MINISTRY'S PORTAL AND OTHER WEBSITES

Work on the Ministry's portal has been ongoing for the past twelve months and is progressing well. The website is being overhauled completely and a new e-services portal based on new database and internet technology is being deployed.

The Office also launched the European Asylum Support Office website as part of the preparation to support Malta's bid in hosting this Office. The website was designed, developed and launched in record time.

REPLACEMENT OF PCs AND PRINTERS

This Office embarked on a project of replacing all current PCs installed in all departments falling under the Ministry's portfolio. This was done through the PC leasing programme launched by MITA. All departments and agencies now boast of completely new PCs. This was a complex project which had to cater for the safe transfer of valuable data and reinstallation of numerous programs some of which were old and problematic.

The Ministry is also embarking on a project whereby various small desktop printers are being replaced by suitable departmental multifunction printers in order to reduce the operational cost related to printing and also to reduce the environmental impact connected with the operation of large number of desktop printers. All departmental multifunction printers being procured are equipped with duplex units with the aim of reducing the consumption of printing paper.

REPLACEMENT OF FILE SERVER AT JUSTICE UNIT

A new file server for the Justice Unit was procured to cope with the increasing data processing and archival requirements of this unit. The file server will be installed and commissioned early next year.

OTHER PROJECTS

Various other projects are being executed or being planned at CPD, CCF, Probation Services, Detention Services, Refugee Commission, Third Country Nationals and others. Other projects related to Electronic Tagging, Enterprise Information Management System and FOIA are being planned.

Civil Protection Department

An incident reporting system is being developed for CPD which will be used by all its remote stations. All intervention records which are being stored manually at the moment will now be stored on a database and will provide the necessary decision support, management information and statistical analysis required by the department.

This Office also continued to invest in network active and passive equipment that will enable CPD to link numerous remote stations to its central IT systems and to other corporate systems accessible through the government network.

Freedom of Information Act Workflow

This Office conducted research on systems developed to support the workflow required to manage the business functions instigated by the introduction of Freedom of Information Act. This Office is currently evaluating the feasibility of all possible options before deciding on the best possible system to implement that would meet the business requirements of MJHA as the lead ministry for FOI.

Electronic Tagging for CCF and Probation Services

This Office was requested to conduct the necessary research on existing electronic tagging technologies in preparation to the introduction of an electronic tagging pilot project for inmates at the Corradino Correction Facility and for the clients at the Probation Services.

PCs for re-training at SATU

One of the objectives at SATU is to provide residents with educational opportunities which will help their re-integration into society as better citizens and also improve their chances of finding worthwhile

employment. During the year, this Office helped SATU set up a training room to deliver training for its residents in basic ICT literacy by providing 20 personal computers and peripherals to equip the room with the necessary facilities.

EU funded PCs for Refugee Commission and AWAS

This Office offered its assistance to both REFCOM and AWAS in the tendering process to procure EU funded PCs. The assistance was given in the drafting of the tender dossiers as well as in the adjudication process.

CONCLUSION

ICT is now at the core of each business process and has become increasingly relevant in the JHA area with Malta's membership in the European Union and must support the business vision for law enforcement and justice cooperation. The necessary human and financial resources are being allocated to meet the objectives at a national level as outlined in the Smart Island National ICT Strategy and to meet all EU obligations ensuing from Council Decisions and Information Management Strategies currently being developed and intended to contribute to the Stockholm Programme and its Action Plan.

KEVIN BUHAGIAR
Chief Information Officer

Third Country Nationals Unit

EUROPEAN MIGRATION NETWORK

The year 2009 was the first operational one since the establishment of the Maltese National Contact Point of the European Migration Network (EMN). The Contact Point operates on a national level to fulfil the EMN's aims in terms of information dissemination to the European institutions, authorities from other Member States and institutions on migration and asylum by providing updated, objective, solid and comparable data on asylum and migration. These in turn assist in the European Union's policy-making in the respective areas. Officials from the Third Country Nationals Unit continued to participate in EMN Contact Point meetings in Brussels aimed at coordinating the work conducted by the various contact points found in EU Member States. A high-level official from within the Ministry attended for two meetings of the EMN Steering Board in Brussels.

During this year, the Contact Point worked on the completion of three studies: one on Unaccompanied Minors, one on Assisted Return and another on Non-Harmonised Protection Statuses. Reports related to the EMN on Asylum and Migration Policy in 2008 (annual policy report) and another on developments related to the European Pact on Immigration and Asylum for the current reference year were prepared by the Policy Development Directorate. Preparations on a report on migration statistics for 2007 were also underway. Other exercises in relation to the EMN such as the collation of laws and case-law in this field started being collected.

The Unit is actively pursuing a Twinning with the Italian NCP in order to explore common Mediterranean aspects of Migration in relation to the EU scenario.

A seminar discussing the studies conducted during the year and developments in the national situation was held in December 2009 for public officials, NGOs and interested parties. Representatives from the Italian NCP also made presentations on the Italian situation. Other meetings for experts of the National Contact Point were also held during the year.

LEGAL AID

The Unit is responsible for the administration of legal aid provision to asylum appellants. In the execution of this task, the Office liaises continuously with the Refugee Appeals Board, and the Office of the Refugee Commissioner, the appellant, the Reception Centres and NGOs.

During 2009, the Office continued to progress in the management of legal aid requests, making attempts to deal with the backlog of pending cases which, carried on from 2008, already amounted to 587. This unprecedented number of outstanding cases from the previous year was a consequence of a sharp increase in the number of refusal decisions delivered by the Office of the Refugee Commissioner in particular during the last two months of the previous year. Furthermore the number of legal aid requests during the course of 2009 increased sharply also as a direct result of the efficiencies obtained in the asylum determination process and increased awareness of the provision of such assistance.

Whilst every effort is made to conclude cases while the appellant is still in detention, the demand on the legal aid service is very substantial in comparison to the numbers that can effectively be processed in a

very short time-frame while respecting procedures and taking into consideration the number of lawyers offering their service.

The Unit received 625 new requests for legal aid in 2009, processing 502 cases by the end of the year. Of these, 385 cases were assigned to Legal Aid lawyers, 286 of which have been completed. 178 cases have been interviewed, but await the conclusion of submissions by the appointed lawyers. The Unit is placing its emphasis on persons currently residing in detention.

ASSISTED VOLUNTARY RETURN AND REINTEGRATION

The Unit liaised with the International Organisation for Migration in the Restart project, funded under the European Refugee Fund. From 15 April to 8 December 2009, 28 individuals or 24 cases (families are considered as one case) were aided to return to their homeland with support for reintegration. In conjunction with the International Organisation for Migration, the Ministry also assists third country nationals wishing to voluntary return but not taking the reintegration package.

The Dar II, another Assisted Voluntary Return programme, steered by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, between 7 January and 25 May 2009 through the national EU Return Fund, managed by this Ministry helped return 119 immigrants to their respective country.

The total for the year amounted to 148 Assisted Voluntary Returnees.

RESETTLEMENT

During 2009, a major intra-EU resettlement exercise was carried out in partnership with the French authorities. This Unit was actively involved throughout the process. It conducted preparatory meetings, the collation of 200 dossiers, logistical assistance for the week-long French selection mission, liaison with other stakeholders and the eventual reallocation of 95 persons to France. Another resettlement exercise for 11 individuals involved the German authorities in collaboration with local NGOs and international organisations. Thus there were a total of 106 immigrants who were resettled in EU countries.

The Unit liaises and collaborates with the IOM and UNHCR on an ongoing basis in relation to the United States Resettlement Programme.

During 2009 a total of 188 persons enjoying protection in Malta were transferred to the USA and a total of 294 immigrants were resettled.

EU PROJECTS

The Unit was responsible for drawing up a proposal with 10 other Member States and international partners to submit a project proposal under the European Community Actions of the European Refugee Fund, in view of a pilot project for Malta following the call made by the European Council in June 2009. The Ministry will be leading this project, for the expected duration of 18 months starting from January 2010, with partners across 10 other Member States, the UNHCR, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and the Emigrants Commission. The project is expected to reallocate and facilitate the integration of some 255 individuals with international protection residing in Malta.

In view of the pilot project for intra-EU reallocation for Malta, expected to be implemented during 2010, the Unit was involved in the coordination and processing of data related to possible beneficiaries of relocation to other Member States.

Other projects in which the Unit was involved, besides the Restart and Dar projects previously mentioned, were *MAREMCA* which is intended to strengthen Malta's capacities in the field of return through the establishment of cooperation with selected EU Member States, Ghana and Nigeria (underway); *Mare*

Nostrum, which is intended to provide assistance at centres in Sicily and Malta to support rapid initial identification of needs of persons seeking international protection and the subsequent efficient response to these needs (not yet started), *CoMAM* aimed at increasing the communication and networking between the Maltese and African authorities so as to develop better and more sustainable assisted voluntary return programmes and improve reintegration feasibility of potential returnees (still to be implemented), *IRRICO* which, implemented by the IOM, aims at providing return related information for migrants considering returning back to their countries of origin, and *i-Map*, which involves an interactive mapping of migration which also places particular emphasis on the Mediterranean routes.

OTHER INITIATIVES

This Unit, jointly with the Policy Development and EU Affairs Directorates within this Ministry, has taken up various issues concerning asylum related matters including among others the proposed recast of the EC Directive on minimum standards on procedures for granting and withdrawing international protection.

Jointly with the Policy Development Directorate and the Citizenship and Expatriates Affairs Department (MFA), this Unit supported the efforts made in relation to the introduction of a new travel document and the issue of a residence permit for beneficiaries of Subsidiary Protection. The Unit developed the administrative procedures in this regard. Throughout the year this involved the processing and approval of more than 1,500 applications for such documents.

Also during 2009 discussions were held within the General Directors' Immigration Services Conference (GDISC) on a project aimed at attaining technical assistance with regard to language interpretation and medical examinations for age-determination on migrants' arrival.

Earlier in 2009 the Ministry for Justice and Home Affairs accepted an invitation made by the UK's Home Office for the exchange of ideas in the field of assisted voluntary return. Officials from this Unit, together with two other Maltese officials, participated in these discussions. This exchange forum involved the participation of representatives from West African countries who have relations with the UK, European Commission officials and representatives from other EU Member States.

STATISTICS

The administration of asylum and immigration is dependent on information. To this end, this Office has provided support and information on a regular and continuous basis to government and non-governmental stakeholders, both local and foreign. The Ministry coordinates on a regular basis with the relevant stakeholders to produce a monthly summary of asylum and immigration statistics that throw light on progress in the management of the asylum process and related aspects in general.

The Unit has worked, in collaboration with various other entities particularly the Office of the Commissioner for Refugees and the National Statistics Office, towards enabling adequate fulfilment of the obligation emerging from Article 4 of EC Regulation 862/2007 requiring that all EU Member States provide regular statistical data related to applications for international protection by third country nationals. The implementation of the relevant IT system is expected to take place during 2010.

JULIAN MICALLEF

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